BBC

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Middle East

December 2015
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Stars of the month
Cranberries, chestnuts and Brussel sprouts

HEALTH IN A BOWL
Supercharged soups with immune-boosting ingredients

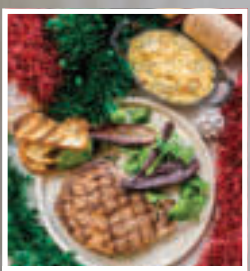
Baking recipes
SEASONAL CAKES

JUST FOR CHRISTMAS!
MANDARIN-IN-THE-MIDDLE CHRISTMAS PUD page 70

The festive issue

★ A fabulous feast made for sharing ★ 15 ways to reinvent your Christmas
★ The ultimate present swap party menu

IT'S BEGINNING TO LOOK A LOT LIKE.....



HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS
Christmas menu options



A DAZZLING NEW YEAR
Glam desserts for sharing

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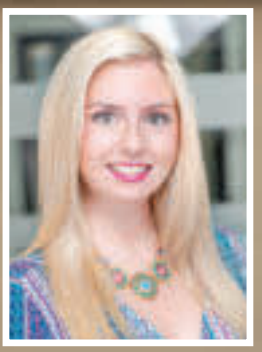




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Welcome!



Well, it's that time of year again! The season of family, friends and deliciously mourish food – my most favourite time of year! December is the month I crave the smell of roast turkey wafting through the house, the log fire burning (or a fired-up BBQ here in the Middle East), a mug of mulled wine with plenty of cinnamon, Michael Bublé's festive album, and board games with my family. It's a period of traditional food made at home with love, and to get you into the spirit of things, this issue is filled from top to bottom with recipes for cooking-up the perfect festive feast!

In addition to the seasonal favourites, we've got a selection of recipes that mix things up a little bit – I'd highly recommend giving the Christmas turduken roll a try (*Home for the holidays, pg47*), it's turkey, duck, beef and chicken, all rolled up into one serving! And, to help put a spin on your dinner parties, check out *15 ways to reinvent the holidays on page 55*, to learn a few tricks that'll help make the holidays stress-free and easy-going. I think the key to avoiding any last minute kitchen nightmares is to be prepared, so don't miss the handy checklist that chef Scott from Rivington Grill has put together to help you through the big day (*A perfectly planned Christmas, p77*). And, if you're hosting a get-together to welcome in the New Year (can you believe it's going to be 2016!) be sure to try the dazzling cake with sparklers on page 71 – it's a treat guaranteed to wow your guests.

All this talk of Christmas food does encourage the thought of extra pounds, but let's not worry about that just now – we'll make amends with January's healthy-themed issue! If you are however, looking for a health-kick this month try the supercharged soups on page 30, which are jam-packed with yummy goodness!

Enjoy your festive cooking this month, everyone. Wishing you and your family the happiest of holidays!

See you in the New Year,

Sophie
Editor

WHAT WE'RE LOVING!



Sales manager, Michael says: "I love this beef recipe – you can't beat a good steak!"



Designer, Odie says: "One of my favourite parts of Christmas is getting the cheeseboard out!"



"These panforte pies taste delicious and are perfect for sharing," says sales executive, Liz.

goodfood Middle East

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WIN!

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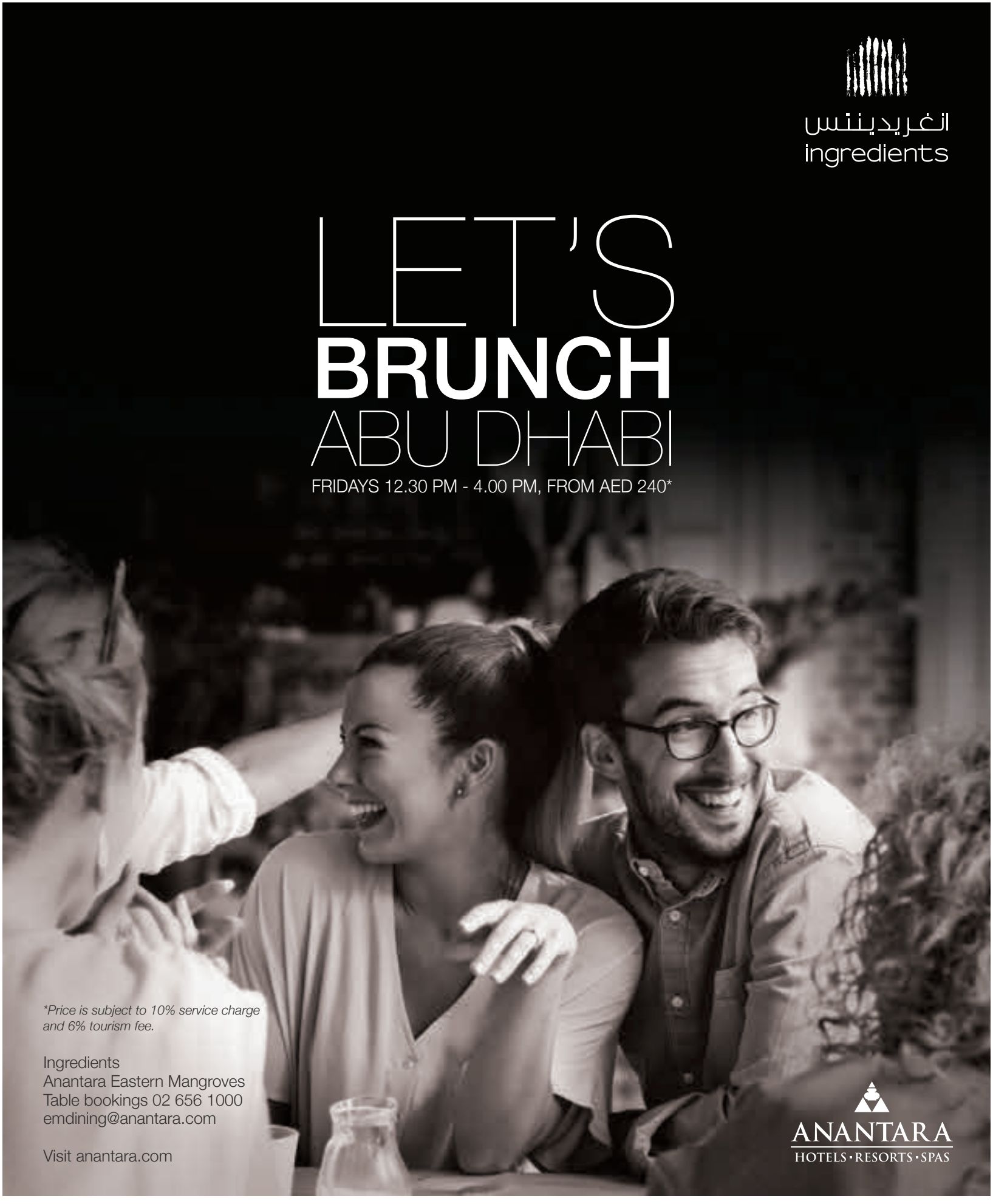
V Suitable for vegetarians
You can freeze it
Not suitable for freezing
Easy Simple recipes even beginners can make
A little effort These require a bit more skill and confidence – such as making pastry
More of a challenge Recipes aimed at experienced cooks
Low fat 12g or less per portion
Low cal 500 calories or less per main.

Superhealthy Low in saturated fat, 5g or less per portion; low in salt, 1.5g or less; and at least one of the following: provides one-third or more of your daily requirement of fibre, iron, calcium, folic acid and/or vitamin C, or counts at least one portion of your recommended 5-a-day fruit and veg.
Good for you Low in saturated fat, low in salt.
Heart healthy Low in saturated fat, with 5g or less, and low in salt, with 1.5g or less, and high in omega-3 fatty acids

1 of 5-a-day The number of portions of fruit and/or veg contained in a serving
Vit C **Iron** **Omega-3** **Calcium** **Folate** **Fibre**
Indicating recipes that are good sources of useful nutrients
GLUTEN FREE Indicates a recipe is free from gluten
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P Contains pork
Contains alcohol


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EXPERT Q&A

QUESTION OF THE MONTH

With the festive season upon us, which three eateries would you recommend visiting for getting into the holiday spirit with family and friends?



Kate Fisher

A highly-qualified and experienced nutritionist who is a trained microbiologist, and graduate of Nutritional Medicine from university of Surrey. Among other things, she has worked with private clinics and food brands as a nutrition consultant.

Aquara restaurant at Dubai Marina Yacht Club has a delicious Dhs150-a-head Saturday evening family roast buffet. While amazing views of the marina are a given, the light crispy salad combos, roasted meats with seasonal veggies and low-in-sugar desserts to choose from are excellent, and, on December 25th this year they will be converting the luxury yacht in the marina into Santa's grotto! Secondly, year-on-year I go to Madinat Jumeirah's Souk Festive Market, which starts December 17 from 3pm. You will find all the seasonal festive treats here, like roasted chestnuts, the only nut with no fat. Lastly, the Waterfront restaurant at JBH is a great place for enjoying the hotel's decorations with a great view.

Argentinian might not be the obvious festive choice but Gaucho has a great celebratory menu and their mixologists certainly know how to conjure up some Christmas spirit. Emirates Golf Club has a programme of events including a hilarious Christmas quiz plus casual buffet-style cuisine. I always take away my turkey from there too. Lastly, if going to Lapland is out of the question, a trip closer to home is Sir Baniyas Island, Abu Dhabi. Their festive schedule includes lots of magical stuff for children including real deer pulling Santa's sleigh. I was really impressed by the dedication of the whole team when I stayed there. The food is excellent but they are not at all fazed if you want something a bit different either. I'm sure their festive spread will be second to none.

Sally Prosser

Author of award-winning food and travel blog mycustardpie.com and keen eater. Champion of sourcing local, ethical, seasonal ingredients, knowing where your food comes from and the impact it has on your health and the planet. Loves custard.





Tomas Reger

Award-winning freelance chef and food consultant. Originally from the Czech Republic, he started his culinary career in London. Founder of Tomas Reger Food Consultants, the respected chef works on bespoke restaurant projects and a wide range of events.

It's a bit of a tricky question for me as where I am from, turkey is not part of the festive meal – traditionally we would have fish or lentil soup, followed by a carp with potato salad – so you will not get suggestions of where to find the best turkey trimmings from me. I would suggest, you ditch the restaurants for the festive month altogether and cook instead. The weather is fantastic and what better way to get into the Christmas spirit than celebrating with friends and family over a meal – be it a bbq or potluck dinner. Get inspired by one of the recipes inside this issue, pick up your ingredients from a farmers market (starting on November 27 in Business Bay avenue) and get cooking. And if you really want to go all out – fly to Vienna or Prague to visit their Christmas market – it's one experience not to be missed.

To get into the spirit of things, my top three festive eateries would have to be firstly, Salmontini in Mall of the Emirates where you can sit back and watch the skiers coming down the snow slopes in the ski dome, or even have fun playing in the snow yourself before having a nice bite to eat. Secondly, I'd choose The Ivy in Jumeirah Emirates Towers when I want to go out with my wife for a traditional festive dinner (shhs, don't tell the kiddies). And lastly, to get the children involved I'd go to the Irish Village where you'll find a good traditional buffet, Santa Claus with lots of pressies, plus a bouncy castle for keeping the kids entertained.

Darren Velvick

Chef de cuisine at The Croft, Dubai Marriott Harbour Hotel & Suites, the former patron chef of Table9 has also been head chef at two Michelin-starred restaurants, Marcus Wareing at The Berkeley, and worked alongside Gordon Ramsay at Pétrus.



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Star Letter

Diabetes is a slow killer in our society, and there is still a lot of unawareness about this chronic disease. I come from a diabetic family background and have always had the fear of one day getting it myself. *BBC Good Food Middle East's* article in the November 2015 issue called "10 tips to prevent or control diabetes" provided valuable tips to manage the condition for my family and I, and I really enjoyed it. On the occasion of world Diabetic Day (November 14), I really appreciated and was thankful for your effort to publish this piece and to provide awareness of diabetes to our local community. Well done and keep it up!

Zaitoon Hameed





For over four years of being a *BBC Good Food Middle East* magazine subscriber, I've seen the magazine evolve. Your monthly issues never fail to excite me with recipes and cooking ideas. I'm not a professional cook, but your recipes inspire me and bring out the best in my culinary skills to prepare delicious food that we can share with our families and friends. Thank you for your endless efforts of entertaining and educating us.

Donna Padua



Fusion is the way forward and your November issue was the epitome of fusion for me as it moved from the celebration of Diwali to the anticipation of Thanksgiving. I simply love the magazine as it is like a complete, balanced and wholesome meal plan with starters, mains and desserts, in the varied contents that it delivers to satiate us every month. Besides all the goodies that come packed in the magazine I am a huge fan of your Food Club and I love your Behind the Scenes as it transports me to new places where I cannot be.

Dr Rajul Matkar



Although I'm a lover of everything that *BBC Good Food Middle East* does, I'd just like to say that I really enjoyed last month's interview with Chef Alfredo Russo. As a passionate home cook and aspiring chef, I really love the interviews with chefs as it gives me insight into how the professionals think and top tips to things I should be trying in the kitchen to improve my skills. Please can we see more of these interviews? Looking forward to the festive issue!

Sandra Jones

TALK TO US!

Email us on feedback@bbcgoodfoodme.com
with your thoughts and comments, and send us your photos with your copy of BBC Good Food ME!

You can also connect with us on social media! Find us on: **@bbcgoodfoodme**

Or, you could write to us at: **The Editor**, BBC Good Food Middle East.Grosvenor Business Tower, Tecom, Office 804PO Box 13700, Dubai, UAE.

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Flavours *of the* month

Here is what's hot and happening around town this month.

New on the block

Bread Street Kitchen, Atlantis

We Love!

Gordon Ramsey's latest outpost has officially opened, offering informal, accessible modern European cuisine, creative beverages and live entertainment. Focusing on fresh and seasonal ingredients, signature dishes include the beef wellington, stone bass carpaccio, Shepard's pie and of course, fish and chips. *Call 04-4262626.*

PLAY Restaurant and Lounge, H Hotel

Led by the ex-Zuma chef, Reif Othman, PLAY is set to become Dubai's newest dining marvel, brought to life with a playful spirit and a fresh infusion of Mediterranean with Asian cuisines. The homegrown concept comprises a gourmet restaurant with an elevated private dining area, a lounge, and a specialised cocktail bar. *Call 04-5018888.*

Bistrot Bagatelle, Fairmont Dubai

Indulge in French classics such as whole roasted truffle chicken, foie gras and more, paired with chic Parisian décor, lively music and the classic southern French 'joie de vivre'. With its doors opening on December 9, this international Mediterranean hot spot is not a place to miss. *Call 04-3545025.*

Intersect By Lexus, DIFC

If the finest and freshest of ingredients are what you're looking for, this newly opened restaurant is for you. Focusing on a simple, yet sophisticated environment, the food lounge led by Chef Tomas Reger is set to offer dishes like beet and barley risotto, Chilean sea bass with yuzu glazed turnips or slow cooked beef short ribs with celeriac puree.

Bread Street Kitchen & Bar, Atlantis The Palm

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Christmas offerings



Pierchic, Al Qasr Hotel

We Love!

For something different, head to the Christmas Day Seafood Brunch, which will showcase a selection of dishes with freshly caught lobster, Norwegian prawns, smoked salmon from the Severn and Wye Valley as well as fresh clams and mussels from New Zealand, plus more. Available 12pm-4pm at Dhs800 inclusive of beverages, Dhs650 with soft drinks. *Call 04-432 3232.*

Fümé, Pier 7 and Downtown Dubai

Expect a whole table-sharing Christmas Brunch set menu from both of Dubai's Fümé' outlets. Enjoy succulent turkey with all the trimmings and mince pies to follow. Or, select a delectable hot smoked salmon tart, tender rib eye with perhaps some atomic fruitcake to finish. Priced at Dhs195 per person. *Call 04-4215669 (Marina) or 04-4568784 (Downtown).*

Cresendo, Anantara The Palm, Dubai

With live cooking stations serving a wide selection of tasty, traditional festive dishes, the Fork & Cork brunch is perfectly suited for friends and family. With lively seasonal tunes, atmospheric festive decorations, a special festive raffle draw at the end of the brunch and a visitor from the North Pole for the kids, it's set to be a good day for all. Starting from *Dhs345. Call 04-5678888.*



Feast, Sheraton Grand Hotel Dubai

Indulge on the fine flavours of five continents this year for a Christmas day to remember, which caters to all tastes without sacrificing the traditional must-haves. Starting 1pm-5pm, packages begin at Dhs395 with soft drinks and Dhs545 with house beverages. *Call 04-5034444.*



Caravan and Gulf Lawn, The Ritz-Carlton Dubai

Enjoy Christmas outside at a gourmet brunch with views of the sea as Santa and his helpers keep the children entertained and a live jazz band plays. From 1pm-4pm, packages are available from Dhs320 for children (5-12yrs, under 5 is free), Dhs595 including soft drinks, and Dhs995 including free flowing premium beverages and fizz. *Call 04-3186150.*

Zaytinya, Abu Dhabi

Designed to help the little ones rejoice in the magical season, a brunch on December 25 will include fun and games. Alongside interactive stations around the restaurant serving up Zaytinya's Lebanese classics, there will also be traditional turkey with all the trimmings. Priced at only Dhs95 for adults and Dhs35 for kids. *Call 02-4474489.*

Perry & Blackwelder's, Madinat Jumeirah

If you're looking for Southern U.S comform over the holidays, P&B's smokehouse has a finger-licking BBQ platter in store for you. With a set menu priced for Dhs250 dishes include deep-fried Louisiana turkey, slow roasted maple leaf farm prime duckling and boneless leg of lamb, plus more. *Call 04-4323232.* >>



Boxing Day fun

Rivington Grill, Souk al Bahar

Wrap up the Christmas weekend with the special 'Rivi Recovery' package on December 26, which includes a traditional roast beef dinner, complete with dessert and choice of house beverage or Bloody Mary. Available from 12.00pm-11.15pm for Dhs175. *Call 04-4323232.*

CUT by Wolfgang Puck

If you don't want the party to stop, join chef Raymond on December 26 for a Boxing Day Brunch. With delicious meaty favourites on the menu paired with CUT's signature beverage trolley, it's sure to offer quite the holiday vibe. From 12pm-4pm, starting at Dhs290 per person with soft drinks and Dhs440 with selected beverages. *Call 04-8883444.*

Celebrating the New Year

The Croft, Dubai Marina

We Love!

Chef Darren's special four course festive menu includes everything from butternut and Parmesan soup to nutmeg and custard tarts. Enjoy the delectable spread while enjoying marina views from the outside JuniperGarden. From 7pm-10pm, Dhs450 person and Dhs100 for children. *Call 04-3194794.*

Hakkasan Dubai, Emirates Towers

Celebrate the start of 2016 with delicious Cantonese cuisine, including dishes like crispy duck salad, charcoal grilled honey Chilean sea bass, stir-fry Canadian lobster with black truffle and more. The three-course menu starts at Dhs588 per person. *Call 04-3848484.*

Constellation Ballroom, The Address Dubai Marina

For those looking to host a big celebration with friends and family, indulge in some of the festive favourites including roast turkey, wicklow leg of lamb, striploin of silver fern beef, braised veal with black truffle, wagyu rossini,roasted guinea fowl and a selection of various other dishes from Chinese, Indian, Thai, Vietnamese, Arabic, Mexican and European cuisines. From 12pm-4pm, with prices starting from Dhs375. *Call 04-4367777.*

Hoi An, Shangri-la Dubai

Take a Vietnamese culinary trail to Hoi An to welcome the New Year with a seven-course set menu. Enjoy a pan-seared king crab cake with sweet chili sauce or five-spice wagyu beef with taro cake and forest mushroom. End the evening with a Vietnamese mille feuille and the incredible view of the fireworks from Downtown Dubai. From 7pm-12am, starting at Dhs745 per person for food only or Dhs995 with grape pairing and two glasses of fizz. *Call 04-343888.*

Gaucho, DIFC

Ring in the New Year in Argentine style, dancing until the early hours. For Dhs1,200 per head, the package includes a set menu with unlimited beverages from 8pm-2am. *Call 04-4227878.*

Pure Sky Lounge, Hilton Dubai JBR

See in 2016 from the rooftop with views of Palm Jumeirah's fireworks. For Dhs695 per person, you can enjoy unlimited house beverages and a gourmet feast including items such as dry aged beef sirloin and burrata with sweet ripe peach. The package will take place from 9pm-12am. *Call 04-3747888.* gf


Pure Sky Lounge, Hilton Dubai JBR

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Tried & tasted

Each month, we review two of the city's top tables.

Festive



Where: Ruth's Chris Steak House, The Address Dubai Marina

What's it like: For those with family and friends visiting over the holidays, here's an outlet perfect for entertaining. With deep red and dark wood interiors, paired with smart white tablecloths, the restaurant offers a great festive ambiance. The dimly-lit upscale steakhouse reminds me of a swanky jazz club somewhere in the States – especially when the live music starts after dinner in the adjoining cocktail bar – a perfect spot for pre- or after-dinner drinks. Seated in a cosy, intimate half-circle booth, my dining partner and I were greeted with a generous menu selection and the option of two signature cocktails to begin with. We enjoyed a selection of delicious barbecued jumbo shrimp sautéed in New Orleans-style reduced white wine, butter, garlic and spices, plus seared ahi-tuna complemented with spirited sauce and hints of mustard and beer to start. We then jumped in to satisfy our meaty cravings with mains of 11oz corn-fed filet and a 16oz USDA Prime ribeye, both cooked to medium-rare perfection. Although we were too full to indulge in desserts, the menu sounded divine and completely mourish (saying no to the cheesecake was a tough call!). Over the festive period, including Christmas day, the restaurant has a variety of promotions on, including set menus showcasing oysters, lobster, USDA prime beef tenderloin with foie gras, roast turkey with all of the trimmings, and more from just Dhs350 a head! It's without a doubt an outlet for getting into the spirit!

If you want to go: Around Dhs400 per person for three-courses, excluding beverages. Call 04-4549538.



Sophie McCarrick

Photographs SUPPLIED and by REVIEWER



Where: Delphine, The H Hotel, Dubai

What's it like: With a crystal-adorned bar and glamorous furnishings, the Californian-inspired restaurant and bar is perfect for every occasion, be it post-work drinks where you can take advantage of the impressively-reasonable happy hour, the Friday brunch or a fun-filled evening with friends and family while enjoying the super-talented live pianist and bands – a must-try for the festive season. The downside to Delphine: there are too many appetising dishes vying for your attention, which all come in generously-sized portions, making it near-impossible to decide. If you're planning on ordering as much as I did (don't), resist the deliciously warm bread basket. Instead, wait for the spectacular corn bread with honey butter. As someone who often opts for carbs over leaves, I'm shocked to admit that the kale salad, which was full of zesty flavours from the citrus dressing with added crunch from the crispy pita, was my favourite dish of the evening! The truffle fries and mains of roast chicken were equally as impressive – and large – with no shortage of flavour, making them far too easy to wolf down. Offering great value for money, along with fabulous entertainment every night of the week and a wonderfully hospitable team, Delphine has quickly become one of my favourite Dubai haunts and after just one visit, I have no doubt it'll be one of yours too!

If you want to go: Dhs250+ per person, including beverages. Call 04-5018623.



Surena Chande

ADVERTISEMENT FEATURE

MOUTHWATERING GRILLS WITH BREVILLE

Enjoy versatility at its best with the Breville BBQ Grill that cooks everything from eggs to steak to seafood – it doesn't get much better, or easier!

Creating homemade grills indoors and outdoors has never been easier than with Breville's BBQ Grill, which allows you to cook a wide-range of food without gas. The twin die cast thick plate design, with independent thermal sensors for consistent searing heat enables you to BBQ to perfection, no matter where you are. And, it gets better. Simply tilt the plates to drain any excess fat and oil to make your dish an even healthier option!

The BBQ Grill by Breville is available from Breville UAE Showroom (Call: 04-2522264), and the Breville Corner at Dubai Garden Centre for Dhs1,599.



Breville
Thought for food



WHAT WE'RE COOKING:
AUSSIE BURGER

WHAT INGREDIENTS WE NEED:
453g ground beef
150g fresh breadcrumbs
1 small onion, peeled and finely chopped
1 tsp garlic, crushed
1 tbsp fresh parsley, chopped
1 egg, lightly beaten
TO SERVE
4 slices of beef bacon
4 whole grain rolls
1 8-oz can of sliced beets, drained
2 Roma tomatoes, thinly sliced
Ketchup
4 slices sharp cheddar cheese
Shredded lettuce as neededww
Butter, as needed

WHAT APPLIANCES WE NEED:
The fantastically versatile BBQ Grill by Breville. From grilling to searing, this grill is all you'll need to cook the most perfect burger patties. The extra thick die-cast grill plates maintain searing heat no matter what you are cooking, so you can even crisp off your rolls too, if you like!

HOW WE COOK IT:
1 Preheat The BBQ Grill to medium high heat.
2 Combine beef with breadcrumbs, onion, parsley, garlic, and egg. Form into 4 patties.
3 Place on grill and cook for 4-5 minutes per side or to your preferred doneness.
4 Place beef bacon on grill or pan and cook for 4 minutes.
5 Butter the rolls lightly.
6 Place a patty on each bun and top with bacon, beets, tomato, ketchup, cheese, and lettuce.
7 Serve immediately.

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Culinary Q&A

Expert food advice for you and your family



Darren Velvick,
chef de cuisine at The Croft, Dubai Marriot Harbour Hotel & Suites, addresses your culinary dilemmas.



Q. I'm planning a festive feast, but want to keep it as simple as possible. What are the essential dishes and trimmings I could stick to without going overboard?

A festive feast has to have turkey, pigs in blankets (bacon-wrapped sausages) and stuffing balls (either sausage or sage and onion). These are all flavours that remind me of Christmas; smoked salmon is always a favourite as a starter too or a nice prawn cocktail or a liver pâté.

Q. I struggle to get turkey just right on Christmas Day; it's never tender enough and always seems to be a little too dry. Could you give me some suggestions to avoid that this year?

I always cook the legs separately from the crown as the legs always take longer to cook, which is why the breast meat dries out. Also, you can use a thermometer to check the core to ensure that you get it just right, it should be 23-24°C before you take it out and leave it to rest. That way it can be cooked through without being dried out. You can buy turkey thermometers throughout the region, both online (desertcart.ae have some) and in stores.

Q. What healthy alternatives can I pack in my children's lunchboxes instead of sandwiches?

This is something that even my wife and I struggle with as our son is gluten and dairy intolerant so we try to steer away from cheese, bread etc. Instead, we make gluten-free pasta salad with salmon, chicken and rice, sliced raw organic vegetables such as carrots, mushrooms and cucumber with hummous and rice crackers and pâté. Try sliced meats such as turkey or beef with potato salad too for some variation. We put lentil or hummous crisps in the lunchboxes too as a tasty treat, which are a healthier option. For dessert, we pack one of the following each day: dates, bananas, pineapple, apple and pears.



Kate Fisher,
a highly qualified and experienced nutritionist, is here to keep you healthy and happy.

Nutrition Q&A

I always find that I pile on the pounds at this time of year with all of the dining out and heavy festive meals. How would you advise me to resist temptation and help prevent this from happening? Never go out to the event hungry, eat something an hour beforehand at home that takes a while to digest such as a jacket potato or beans or hummous. This will satisfy and curb your appetite. Plus, ensure that you drink plenty of water throughout the day and evening. To continue this feeling of fullness, nibble on crudités. Avoid perching yourself near the buffet table and if it is a formal dinner situation, eat tiny portions of what you only really enjoy and enjoy each mouthful rather than rushing through the meal!

I've recently started becoming bloated and getting stomach aches after eating bread and pasta, but I was previously fine. Am I intolerant to gluten or would you suggest me cutting it out of my diet for a while? Poor digestion can be due to new bad habits more likely. Ensure that you always chew food well to a paste-like texture as your tummy has no teeth! Avoid drinking any liquids while eating and up to 30 minutes after a meal as this habit dilutes salivary amylase and stomach acid. If food matter arrives in the colon undigested, gas and bloat starts. Ensure after any stomach illness or after a course of antibiotics that a probiotic is taken to reseed your guts with good helpful bacteria. Stress can also reduce digestion along with overtraining (exercising) so try to manage these factors as much as possible. Also, a 14-30 day trial without gluten has to be planned and done correctly due to gluten being in many foods. However, it can be an interesting exercise to monitor your body's reaction.



Compiled by SURENA CHANDE | Photographs SHUTTERSTOCK



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NEWS nibbles

What's hot and happening in the culinary world, here and around the globe.

Gourmet gossip

We're grilling chefs in the region with some of the juiciest culinary questions

What essential gadgets can you not live without in the kitchen?



Chef Reif Othman
PLAY Restaurant and Lounge

"I cannot live without a good cooking range; one that comes with an oven and stove attached – it may seem obvious, but it makes a huge difference to chefs. It allows me to do baking, pastry-making, roasting and much more. Every chef will say that the knife is the most important tool, but I say otherwise. Without a stove or oven there can be no cooking, roasting or baking, so I can live without a knife!"



Chef Neil Witney,
Poco Loco

"I have two; the first is my set of knives – vital in the kitchen for any chef – because though you can always adapt to a new kitchen, having your set of knives is a huge help. Currently, the luxury piece of kit I couldn't live without is a Pacojet, which is a machine that churns ice creams and sorbets to order and gives an unbelievable texture and freshness to the product."



Chef Rashid Muhammed
RIVA

"A classic choice, but an absolute necessity is a full set of good mixing and preparation bowls. It may seem like a bowl is just a bowl, but they are undoubtedly the most used accessory in a kitchen. If possible, find mixing bowls that come with lids because they are great for keeping food in. Stainless steel or heavy ceramic varieties are usually best."

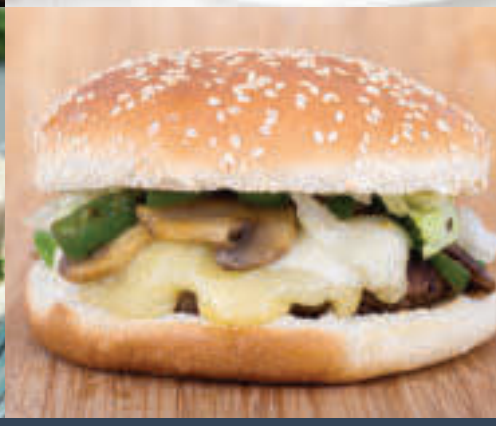












App-solutely brilliant

Yummly is free for iPhone and Android

A recipe book in your pocket, Yummly provides a host of recipes accompanied by mouth-watering visuals allowing you to simplify mealtimes. Based on recommendations and the ability to adjust a host of taste preferences, the app lets users select everything from their likes, dislikes, dietary requirements, allergies, favourite ingredients, cuisines and more. Yummly caters for foodies and fussy-eaters alike and was amusingly started with a simple issue that founder, Dave Feller came up with the idea for Yummly after realising he couldn't find a way to exclude certain ingredients – such as mustard – when searching for recipes. The app aims to revolutionise the way users find recipes and provides them with the ability to do so in a quick, simple and easy way regardless of the user's abilities. It's great for taking to the supermarket with you and is a huge help when shopping for meals – we're all too familiar with the scenario of unloading your shopping only to realise you've left a key ingredient out, so download Yummly now and get cooking!

Compiled by SURENA CHANDE | Photographs SUPPLIED, SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

Go-to-gadgets



This super-simple gadget allows you to get your smoothie fix without the hassle featuring shatterproof bottles, leak-proof lids and one-touch blending action all for a purse-friendly price! From protein shakes to fruit smoothies, the Breville Blend Active Pro Family is a versatile piece of equipment that comes with four blending bottles – two small and two large – with flip-top sipper lids that are perfect for if you're on-the-go. So, whether you're making a fruity blend for your little ones or a shake for the gym, this great gadget has you covered. Breville Blend Active Pro Family, Dhs270, Lakeland.

Cookery is not *chemistry*. It is an *art*. It requires *instinct* and *taste* rather than exact measurements.

– Marcel Boulestine



Culinareads

Bread, Wine, Chocolate: The Slow Loss of Foods We Love by Simran Sethi

Bread, Wine, Chocolate: The Slow Loss of Foods We Love is thought-provoking book that takes a look into how ingredients for our favourite foods and drinks are slowly being depleted. Encouraging readers to become more conscious of the foods they are consuming and ingredients they are using, the book features an array of surprising statistics and facts about the food industry. Author Simran Sethi has travelled to several countries for this book to get to the crux of the issue and to see, first-hand, how the plantations, farms and sources are being affected. Available for purchase from www.amazon.com.

Trending

Grape news!

The internet has been going gaga for grapes, but these aren't any old grapes! A California-based vineyard called Grapery has created a 'cotton candy grape' and though we've not been lucky enough to have a taste of them yet, reactions online appear to prove that they do actually taste like the sugar-filled fluff. The grapes were formed by finding the 'perfect' and most flavoursome grapes from around the world, which were then used as 'parents' and crossed with other grapes. If you spot these on shelves in UAE supermarkets, send us a snap or let us know what you think of them *@BBCGoodFoodME on Twitter*!



DATES FOR THE DIARY

December 9: Getting creative
Little ones can have a ball at Sheraton Abu Dhabi Hotel & Resort this month with the return of its annual Gingerbread Factory event. Perfect for all of the family, children are invited to decorate their own gingerbread house, enjoy a petting zoo and meet Santa Claus before families are able to gather in the lobby where the tree lighting ceremony will take place. For more information, call 02 677 3333 or email irene.vilches@sheraton.com.



December 17-19: Super show
The wait is over! This month marks the arrival of the BBC Good Food Show Dubai for the very first time in the region with a fabulously festive theme. You can expect to see a star-studded line-up of celebrity chefs including Andy Bates, Paul Hollywood and Silvena Rowe. For more information and tickets, visit www.bbcgoodfoodshowdubai.com.



December 17-19: Fabulously festive
If you aren't excited for Christmas yet, you soon will be after a visit to the Dubai Winter Festival! Featuring a winter market, gingerbread house decorating, food and drink galore and so much more as the event returns for its fourth year. So, whether you're going with friends or family get your tickets at www.dubaiwinterfestival.com.



Savour the Spettacolo!



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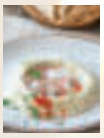
Experience casual yet colourful dining set within a playful European carnival tent at Circo. Enjoy rustic Tuscan fare within stylish and authentic settings. Delight in a unique feast for all your senses, as we present a sensational culinary performance that reflects the essence of Italy.

FOR RESERVATIONS, PLEASE CALL INTERCONTINENTAL ABU DHABI ON 800 423 463
OR VISIT DINING-INTERCONTINENTAL-AD.AE

Home Cooking

Inspiring recipes for easy everyday meals and stylish weekend entertaining

IN THIS SECTION



✳ Celebrate the UAE's National Day with us and try these delicious dishes, **P41**



✳ Prepare a fabulously festive feast for your family and friends, **P47**



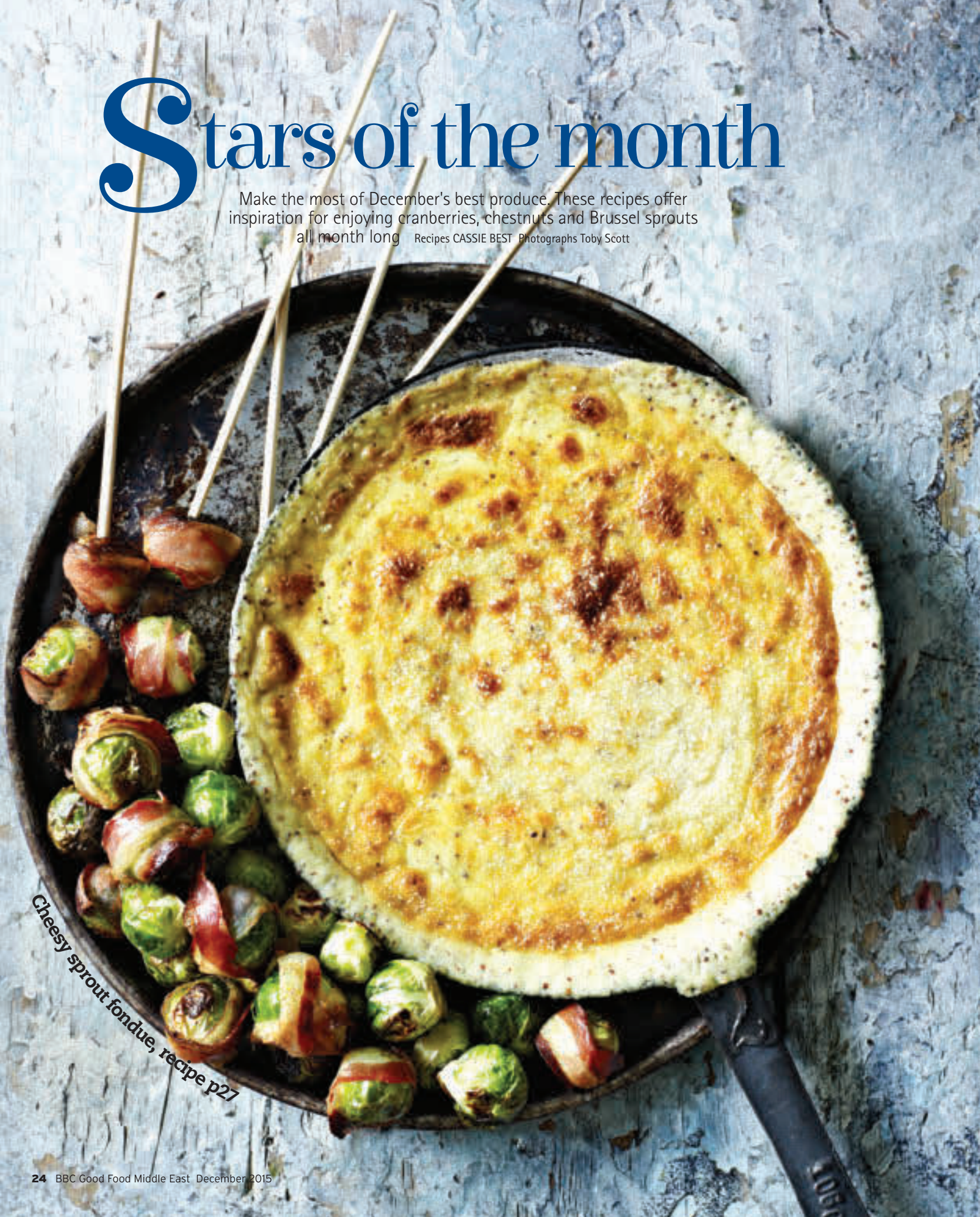
✳ Indulge on New Year's Eve and treat your guests to this crazy cake, **P71**

Golden pilaf with sizzling merguez, recipe p62

Stars of the month

Make the most of December's best produce. These recipes offer inspiration for enjoying cranberries, chestnuts and Brussel sprouts all month long

Recipes CASSIE BEST Photographs Toby Scott



Cheesy sprout fondue, recipe p27

Cranberry, sprout & pecan pilaf

SERVES 4 as a main, 6 as a side **PREP** 20 mins plus 1 hr soaking **COOK** 55 mins A LITTLE EFFORT V

FOLATE | FIBRE | VIT C | 1 OF 5 A DAY | GLUTEN FREE



200g mixed basmati & wild rice
5 tbsp rapeseed or olive oil
1 large onion, finely sliced
thumb-sized piece ginger, peeled and cut into chunks
2 garlic cloves
small bunch coriander, stalks roughly chopped, leaves chilled for later
2 tsp each ground cumin and ground coriander
1 tsp each turmeric and ground cinnamon
½ tsp ground allspice
juice and zest 1 lemon
500g Brussels sprouts, half finely sliced, the rest halved through the stalk
100g pecans
100g fresh cranberries
50g dried cranberries
50g butter
natural yoghurt, to serve

1 Put the rice in a bowl, cover with cold water and leave to soak for 1 hr. Meanwhile, heat 2 tbsp oil in a large pan, add the onion and cook for 10 mins, stirring now and then, until caramelised. While the onion cooks, whizz the ginger, garlic, coriander stalks, spices, lemon juice and zest to a paste in the small bowl of a food processor. Tip into the pan and fry for 5 mins more until aromatic. Scoop the paste and onion out of the pan and set aside, then heat 1 tbsp more oil. Add the sliced sprouts and cook for 8-10 mins, stirring, until softened. Add the paste back to the pan and cook everything together for 1 min more.

2 When the rice has had its soaking time, drain and tip into a pan, cover with fresh water and season with salt. Simmer for 5 mins until just softening, then drain.

3 Heat oven to 200C/180C fan. Put the halved sprouts in a roasting tin with 1 tbsp oil and season well. Roast for 20-25 mins, shaking the pan now and then, until the edges are starting to brown and the sprouts are tender.

4 Meanwhile, mix the rice in the pan with the sliced sprouts, the onion and paste. Add the pecans and all the cranberries, season and mix well. Heat the butter and remaining oil in the pan you cooked the rice in, then tip in the rice mixture and flatten the surface. Poke 3 steam holes in the rice with a wooden spoon, and turn the heat to almost its lowest setting. Cover the pan with a tea towel, then a lid, and cook for 20 mins until the rice is cooked through – if it is still a little firm to bite, re-cover and cook for a further 5 mins. To serve, tip the cooked rice onto a serving platter, mixing in any crunchy bits from the bottom of the pan. Scatter over the roasted sprouts and coriander leaves, and serve with a pot of natural yoghurt.

PER SERVING (6) 480 kcals • protein 9g • carbs 39g • fat 30g • sat fat 6g • fibre 8g • sugar 12g • salt 0.2g »

Clementine & vodka-baked salmon with beetroot crème fraîche sauce

SERVES 8 **PREP** 15 mins **COOK** 45 mins

EASY OMEGA-3

zest and juice 4 clementines or 2 oranges (about 175ml), plus 2 clementines, unpeeled and cut into thin slices
100ml vodka
5 tbsp clear honey
1kg side of salmon, bones removed
FOR THE BEETROOT CRÈME FRAÎCHE SAUCE
250g pack cooked beetroot (not in vinegar), drained and grated
200g crème fraîche
2 tbsp horseradish cream
small pack chives, snipped

1 Put the clementine zest and juice, vodka and honey in a pan, season and bring to a simmer. Bubble for 10 mins until reduced by half. Add the clementine slices and simmer for a further 5 mins until the clementines are softened and a little sticky. Remove them from the liquid and transfer to a plate. Bubble the liquid until thickened to a glossy glaze.

2 Heat oven to 180C/160C fan. Line a baking tray with foil or baking parchment and place the salmon in the middle – or on an angle to help it fit if you need to. Using vwwa sharp knife, cut the salmon into 8 fillets, cutting through the flesh but not the skin, as this will hold the whole thing together. Cut the thinner end into slighter wider fillets, so everyone gets a similar portion. Brush the salmon with the glaze, making sure you get in between the gaps, and save a little for brushing on at the end. Lay the candied clementine on top, down the centre, and bake for 20 mins.

3 While the salmon is cooking, make the beetroot crème fraîche by mixing all the ingredients together in a bowl with plenty of black pepper and a little salt – save a few chives to sprinkle on top. When the salmon is cooked, reheat the remaining glaze, adding a splash of water if it is too thick, and dab it over the top (wash the brush first as it will have come into contact with the raw salmon). Serve the salmon and sauce as part of a buffet, and let everyone dig in.

PER SERVING 420 kcals • protein 27g • carbs 16g • fat 24g • sat fat 9g • fibre 1g • sugar 15g • salt 0.7g



Cheesy sprout fondue

SERVES 6-8 as a starter **PREP** 15 mins
COOK 35 mins EASY CALCIUM VIT C

This versatile recipe is a good way of turning leftover cheese into a help-yourself starter. You can swap the Brie and Gruyère for cheeses of a similar texture, or use a combination of scraps from the fridge. Try a soft blue instead of the Brie, or a strong cheddar in place of the Gruyère.

500g Brussels sprouts, any damaged outer leaves removed
100g pack pancetta (about 8 slices)
200g Brie, rind removed, roughly chopped
100g full-fat cream cheese
100g Gruyère, rind removed, grated
2 tbsp grated Parmesan
2 tbsp milk
2 tsp cornflour
2 tbsp wholegrain mustard
crusty bread, to serve

1 Heat oven to 200C/180C fan. Put the sprouts on a large baking tray, drizzle with oil and season, then roll around the tray to help the seasoning stick. Tear each slice of pancetta in half and wrap each piece around a sprout – you won't have enough to wrap each one. Roast for 20 mins.
2 Meanwhile, whizz the cheese (only 1 tbsp of the Parmesan), milk and cornflour together in a food processor. Stir through the mustard, then transfer to a shallow baking dish or an ovenproof pan (ours was 15cm across and 3cm deep) and scatter with the remaining Parmesan. Reduce oven to 160C/140C fan after the sprouts have had their initial cooking time. Place the cheese dish on the top shelf of the oven and bake for 15 mins, with the sprouts on the tray below.
3 Remove the sprouts and turn on the grill. Cook the fondue under the hot grill for 2-3 mins until golden brown. Serve the fondue with skewers for dunking the sprouts and chunks of bread.

PER SERVING (8) 291 kcals • protein 15g • carbs 4g • fat 23g • sat fat 13g • fibre 3g • sugar 2g • salt 1.2g



Pappardelle with rabbit & chestnut ragu

SERVES 4 **PREP** 20 mins **COOK** 3 hrs 45 mins
EASY P FIBRE VIT C IRON 2 OF 5 A DAY ragu only

2 tbsp rapeseed or olive oil
1 rabbit, jointed (ask your butcher to do this for you)
2 tbsp plain flour
200g smoked bacon lardons
1 onion, finely chopped
1 carrot, finely chopped
1 celery stick, finely chopped
2 garlic cloves, crushed
1 tsp ground cinnamon
1 tsp juniper berries, crushed using a pestle and mortar
3 bay leaves, scrunched up in your hand to release the flavour
2 rosemary sprigs, leaves picked and chopped
200ml red wine
1 chicken stock cube
2 x 400g cans chopped tomatoes
200g cooked chestnuts, roughly chopped
400g pappardelle
3 tbsp milk
zest ½ orange or 1 clementine
small bunch parsley, chopped
Parmesan, to serve (optional)

1 Heat 1 tbsp of the oil in a large, wide pan or flameproof casserole dish with a lid. Season the rabbit and toss in the flour. Add to the hot oil and brown on all sides – you may have to do this in batches. When it is a deep golden brown all over, transfer to a plate. Add the remaining oil and the lardons to the pan and cook for 10 mins until crisp and golden. Add the onion, carrot and celery, and stir for 10 mins, scraping up any crispy bits from the bottom, until the veg has softened. Add the garlic and cook for 1 min more.
2 Next, stir in the cinnamon, juniper, bay leaves and rosemary. After 1 min, pour in the wine and crumble in the stock cube. Simmer for 5 mins, then add the tomatoes and return the rabbit to the pan. Nestle the rabbit into the sauce, cover with a lid and simmer gently for 2 hrs, stirring once or twice.
3 Remove the rabbit, give the sauce a good stir, then cover again. Continue simmering the sauce while you shred the meat from the bones using 2 forks. Discard the bones and add the meat back to the pan, along with half the chestnuts. Cook, uncovered, for another 30 mins until reduced to a thick, rich sauce. Add the remaining chestnuts. *Can now be cooled and chilled overnight, or frozen for up to 2 months.*
4 Cook the pasta following pack instructions. Stir the milk, orange zest and parsley into the sauce and reheat, if chilled. When the pasta is cooled, add it to the sauce and cook together for 1 min more. Serve with Parmesan, if you like.

PER SERVING 830 kcals • protein 53g • carbs 90g • fat 23g • sat fat 7g • fibre 8g • sugar 15g • salt 2.6g »

Clementine possets with cranberry compote & cinnamon palmiers

MAKES 4 possets and 20 palmiers **PREP** 45 mins plus 4 hrs chilling **COOK** 30 mins EASY

600ml double cream
200g golden caster sugar
zest and juice 2 clementines
zest and juice ½ lemon
FOR THE COMPOTE
200g cranberries
85g golden caster sugar
zest 2 clementines or 1 orange
2 tbsp brandy
FOR THE PALMIERS
375g pack ready-rolled puff pastry
50 butter, softened
1½ tsp ground cinnamon
3 tbsp light brown soft sugar

1 Put the cream, sugar and both zests in a saucepan and bring to a simmer. Measure all the juice – you should have 100ml. Turn up the heat and bubble for 3 mins exactly, then stir in the juice. Sieve the mixture into a jug, then divide between 4 glasses. Chill for at least 4 hrs or until set.
2 To make the compote, put all the ingredients in a saucepan. Bring to a simmer, then bubble for 10 mins until thickened and syrupy. Cool, then chill until ready to serve.
3 Now make the palmiers. Heat oven to 200C/180C fan and line 2 baking trays with baking parchment. Unroll the pastry. Mash the butter, cinnamon and sugar until combined, then spread over the surface of the pastry. Roll the pastry up from each of the longer sides until the rolled-up edges meet in the centre. Slice the pastry into 1cm pieces, then place, cut-side up, on the baking trays, flattening a little with the palm of your hand. Bake for 20 mins until golden and puffed up, then cool on a wire rack. Serve each posset with a spoonful of compote and a palmier or two.

PER POSSET WITH 1 TBSP COMPOTE
970 kcals • protein 2g • carbs 58g • fat 81g • sat fat 50g • fibre none • sugar 58g • salt 0.1g
PER PALMIER 101 kcals • protein 1g • carbs 10g • fat 6g • sat fat 3g • fibre none • sugar 3g • salt 0.2g




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HEALTH IN A BOWL

Supercharged soups

A bowl of soup is comforting, and when it's packed with immune-boosting ingredients it can also help to ward off seasonal ills

Recipes SARA BUENFELD Photographs MIKE ENGLISH

Food styling SARA BUENFELD | Styling SARAH BIRKS | Immune-boosting info KERRY TORRENS



IMMUNE BOOSTERS

Garlic The active oils work like an antibiotic, so are helpful for treating infections

Coconut Helps to balance gut bacteria as it contains a type of fat called lauric acid, which inhibits bacteria and viruses

Red lentil & coconut soup, recipe p32

Beef goulash soup, recipe p32

IMMUNE BOOSTER

Sweet potato An easy-to-digest source of carotenoids, which supply vitamin A

SUPER-CHARGED TOPPINGS

Almonds Rich in protective vitamin E – eat with their skins intact, because flavonoids found in the skins more than double vitamin E's protective potency.

Bio yoghurt A regular intake of fermented foods like natural bio yoghurt is good for the gut (where 60% of our immune defences are), and may increase our resistance to viral and bacterial infection.

Limes As well as being rich in vitamin C, which is essential for good immune function, limes help the liver to detoxify the body; the skin and zest are particularly potent.

Nutmeg Has anti-microbial properties; also enhances digestion and stimulates appetite.

Parsley This humble herb is rich in immune-supportive vitamin C.

Wholegrain rice Rich in minerals including zinc, which can help to shorten the duration of a cold.

Carrot & ginger soup

SERVES 4 **PREP** 15 mins **COOK** 25-30 mins
EASY V LOW FAT FIBRE 3 OF 5 A DAY GOOD 4 YOU

1 tbsp rapeseed oil
1 large onion, chopped
2 tbsp coarsely grated ginger
2 garlic cloves, sliced
1/2 tsp ground nutmeg
850ml vegetable stock
500g carrots (preferably organic), sliced
400g can cannellini beans (no need to drain)
SUPERCHARGED TOPPING
4 tbsp almonds in their skins, cut into slivers
sprinkle of nutmeg

1 Heat the oil in a large pan, add the onion, ginger and garlic, and fry for 5 mins until starting to soften. Stir in the nutmeg and cook for 1 min more.
2 Pour in the stock, add the carrots, beans and their liquid, then cover and simmer for 20-25 mins until the carrots are tender.
3 Scoop a third of the mixture into a bowl and blitz the remainder with a hand blender or in a food processor until smooth. Return everything to the pan and heat until bubbling. Serve topped with the almonds and nutmeg.
PER SERVING 293 kcals • fat 12g • saturates 1g • carbs 31g • sugars 19g • fibre 8g • protein 10g • salt 0.9g

Tip
Cooking the chicken carcass for an extended period helps to extract the minerals from the bones, making the broth more nourishing.

Bone broth

SERVES 4 **PREP** 20 mins **COOK** 45 mins
A LITTLE EFFORT LOW FAT GOOD 4 YOU GLUTEN FREE

1 meaty chicken carcass, plus any jellified roasting juices from it, skin and fat discarded
1 large onion, halved and sliced
zest and juice 1 lemon
2 bay leaves
1-2 red chillies, halved, deseeded and sliced
1 tsp ground coriander
1/2 tsp ground cumin
small pack coriander, stems and leaves chopped and separated
1 large garlic clove, finely grated
SUPERCHARGED TOPPING
250g pouch wholegrain basmati rice

1 Break the chicken carcass into a large pan and add the onion, 1 1/4 litres of water, the lemon juice and bay leaves. Cover and simmer for 40 mins. Remove from the heat and allow to cool slightly, to make things a bit easier to handle.
2 Place a colander over a bowl and scoop out all the bones into the colander. Pick through them, stripping off the chicken and returning it with any onion as you work your way down the pile of bones.
3 Return any broth from the bowl to the pan – and any jellified roasting juices – along with the chilli, ground coriander, cumin, coriander stems, lemon zest and garlic. Cook for a few mins until just bubbling – don't overboil as you will spoil the delicate flavours. Taste, and season only if you need to. Meanwhile, heat the rice following pack instructions, then toss with the coriander leaves. Ladle the broth into bowls and top with the rice.
PER SERVING 150 kcals • fat 3g • saturates 1g • carbs 24g • sugars 5g • fibre 2g • protein 6g • salt 0.9g

Beef goulash soup

This is a great soup for anyone convalescing from an illness.

SERVES 2-3 (easily doubled) **PREP** 15 mins **COOK** 1 hr
EASY LOW FAT FIBRE VIT C 3 OF 5 A DAY GOOD 4 YOU

1 tbsp rapeseed oil
1 large onion, halved and sliced
3 garlic cloves, sliced
200g extra lean stewing beef, finely diced
1 tsp caraway seeds
2 tsp smoked paprika
400g can chopped tomatoes
600ml beef stock
1 medium sweet potato, peeled and diced
1 green pepper, deseeded and diced
SUPERCHARGED TOPPING
150g pot natural bio yoghurt
good handful parsley, chopped

1 Heat the oil in a large pan, add the onion and garlic, and fry for 5 mins until starting to colour. Stir in the beef, increase the heat and fry, stirring, to brown it.
2 Add the caraway and paprika, stir well, then tip in the tomatoes and stock. Cover and leave to cook gently for 30 mins.
3 Stir in the sweet potato and green pepper, cover and cook for 20 mins more or until tender. Allow to cool a little, then serve topped with the yoghurt and parsley (if the soup is too hot, it will kill the beneficial bacteria in the yoghurt).
PER SERVING (3) 345 kcals • fat 12g • saturates 4g • carbs 28g • sugars 18g • fibre 7g • protein 25g • salt 1.0g

Red lentil & coconut soup

SERVES 4 **PREP** 5 mins **COOK** 30 mins
EASY V 1 OF 5 A DAY

100g red lentils
1 heaped tsp turmeric
1 tbsp coarsely grated ginger
2 garlic cloves, sliced
1 litre vegetable stock
400ml can coconut milk
2 leeks, well washed and sliced
2 handfuls baby spinach (approx 50g)
SUPERCHARGED TOPPING
2 limes, cut into wedges

1 Tip the lentils into a large pan and add the turmeric, ginger and garlic. Pour in the stock, then cover the pan and simmer for 15 mins until the lentils have softened.
2 Pour in the coconut milk, stir in the leeks, cover and cook for 10 mins more.
3 Add the spinach and cook just to wilt it, then spoon into bowls and squeeze over the lime juice.
PER SERVING 314 kcals • fat 19g • saturates 15g • carbs 22g • sugars 6g • fibre 6g • protein 10g • salt 0.7g GF

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Recipes KATY GILHOOLY Photographs TOBY SCOTT



Dhs23 per serving

Chilli salmon & teriyaki noodles

SERVES 2 **PREP** 15 mins **COOK** 20 mins
EASY | FIBRE | VIT C | OMEGA-3 | 1 OF 5 A DAY

2 skin-on salmon fillets (about 125g each)
1 small red chilli, deseeded and finely chopped
1 tbsp mirin
1 tbsp soy sauce
½ thumb-sized piece ginger, peeled and finely grated
½ small pack coriander, chopped
140g mangetout
2 tbsp teriyaki sauce
300g straight-to-wok noodles

1 Heat oven to 190C/170C fan. Line a baking tray with parchment and put the salmon, skin-side down, on top. Mix together the chilli, mirin, soy, ginger and coriander, and spoon over the salmon. Roast the salmon in the oven for 12-15 mins until just cooked.
2 Heat a large frying pan or wok and cook the mangetout with 1 tbsp water for 2 mins until tender but still with some bite. Stir in the teriyaki sauce and noodles to heat through. Divide between 2 plates and top with the salmon.

PER SERVING 569 kcals • fat 22g • saturates 3g • carbs 54g • sugars 9g • fibre 6g • protein 36g • salt 3.4g

Food styling ELLIE JARVIS | Styling LUIS PERAL

Fish mappas

A coconut fish curry, popular in the southern Indian state of Kerala.

SERVES 4 **PREP** 15 mins **COOK** 20 mins
EASY | IRON | 2 OF 5 A DAY

300g basmati rice
1 tbsp sunflower or vegetable oil
2 large onions, sliced
2 garlic cloves, chopped
450g tomatoes, cut into chunks
3 tbsp tikka curry paste
400g can coconut milk
4 skinless, boneless pollock fillets (about 150g each), or other sustainable white fish, cut into 4cm chunks
½ small pack coriander, roughly chopped

1 Put a large saucepan of water on to boil and cook the rice following pack instructions. Meanwhile, heat the oil in a large, wide saucepan over a medium heat and add the onions. Cook for 5-10 mins until softened and starting to colour. Add the garlic and tomatoes, and fry for 2 mins. Add the curry paste, fry for 2 mins more, then pour in the coconut milk and bring to the boil.
2 Add the fish to the pan and simmer gently for 5-8 mins until just cooked through. Turn off the heat. Sprinkle the coriander over the curry and serve with the rice.

PER SERVING 691 kcals • fat 26g • saturates 16g • carbs 74g • sugars 11g • fibre 4g • protein 39g • salt 0.8g >>



Dhs20 per serving

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LAKELAND



Sausage & maple swede traybake

SERVES 4 **PREP** 15 mins **COOK** 45 mins-1 hr

EASY | CALCIUM | FOLATE | FIBRE | VIT C | 3 OF 5 A DAY | P

1 tbsp olive oil
2 tbsp maple syrup
½ small pack thyme, leaves picked
1 tsp cumin seeds
2 tsp red wine vinegar
1 large swede (about 900g), peeled and cut into 3cm chunks
2 red onions, cut into wedges
8 pork sausages
3 sharp eating apples, such as Granny Smith or Pink Lady, cut into wedges and cored
cooked broccoli, to serve

1 Heat oven to 200C/180C fan/gas 6. Mix the oil, maple syrup, thyme, cumin and red wine vinegar together with seasoning. Toss the swede and onions in the maple mix, then spread out in a large roasting tin and roast in the oven for 15 mins.
2 Add the sausages and apple wedges, and cook for 30-45 mins more, stirring halfway through, until the vegetables are soft and caramelised, and the sausages are cooked through. Serve with broccoli.

PER SERVING 554 kcals • fat 32g • saturates 11g • carbs 42g • sugars 32g • fibre 11g • protein 19g • salt 2.5g



Vietnamese pork & peanut burgers

MAKES 4 **PREP** 15 mins **COOK** 20 mins

EASY | P | uncooked patties only

500g pork mince
2 tbsp oyster sauce
6 spring onions, trimmed and finely chopped (both green and white parts)
thumb-sized piece ginger, peeled and finely grated
½-1 tsp chilli flakes
1 lime, zested and cut into wedges
1 tbsp sesame or sunflower oil
iceberg or Baby Gem lettuce leaves, to serve
4 sesame burger buns
25g roasted unsalted peanuts, roughly chopped
mayonnaise or sweet chilli sauce, to serve (optional)

1 In a large bowl, mix together the pork, oyster sauce, spring onions, ginger, chilli flakes and lime zest. Shape the mixture into 4 patties using your hands. Heat the oil in a large frying pan over a medium heat, add the patties and cook for 8 mins each side until cooked through.
2 To serve, put lettuce leaves on the bottom halves of the buns and squeeze over a little lime juice. Add the burgers, sprinkle over the peanuts and cover with the top halves of the buns. Serve with the remaining lime wedges and mayonnaise or sweet chilli sauce, if you like.

PER BURGER 523 kcals • fat 22g • saturates 6g • carbs 44g • sugars 3g • fibre 3g • protein 35g • salt 2.3g



Cauliflower mac & cheese

SERVES 2 **PREP** 10 mins **COOK** 1 hr

EASY | V | CALCIUM | FOLATE | FIBRE | VIT C | IRON | 1 OF 5 A DAY

1 cauliflower (about 800g), cut into small florets
1 tbsp olive oil
½ small pack thyme, leaves picked
300g macaroni
50g butter
50g plain flour
2 tsp mustard powder
700ml semi-skimmed milk
140g cheddar, grated
50g Parmesan (or vegetarian alternative), finely grated
50g macadamias, roughly chopped

1 Heat oven to 190C/170C fan. Toss the cauliflower with the oil and half the thyme, and spread out on a large non-stick baking tray. Roast for 20 mins until softened and golden brown. Meanwhile, bring a large pan of salted water to the boil and cook the macaroni following pack instructions. Drain.
2 Melt the butter in a medium saucepan, stir in the flour and mustard, and cook for 2 mins. Remove from the heat and gradually whisk in the milk and remaining thyme. Return to the heat and cook for 4-5 mins, whisking all the time, until you have a thick, smooth sauce. Remove from the heat for 2 mins, then stir in the cheddar and half the Parmesan.
3 If the macaroni is sticking together, pour a little boiling water over it, then drain and add to the sauce with the cauliflower. If the sauce is a bit thick, add a splash more milk. Tip into a large, shallow baking dish, sprinkle over the remaining Parmesan and top with the macadamias. Bake for 20 mins until cooked through and bubbling at the edges.

PER SERVING 898 kcals • fat 45g • saturates 21g • carbs 78g • sugars 15g • fibre 10g • protein 39g • salt 1.3g »



Lamb meatballs with watercress dressing

SERVES 4 **PREP** 20 mins **COOK** 20 mins
EASY CALCIUM IRON IRON meatballs only

500g lamb mince
100g feta, crumbled
100g bag watercress
small pack mint, leaves picked and roughly chopped
3 tbsp olive oil
1 tbsp red wine vinegar
300g couscous
200g frozen peas
100g pomegranate seeds, to serve
100g natural yoghurt, to serve

1 Heat oven to 180C/160C fan. Line a baking tray with parchment. Mix the lamb, feta and some seasoning in a large bowl. Roll the mince mixture into 20 walnut-sized balls. Put the meatballs on the prepared tray and bake in the oven for 20 mins until cooked through.
2 To make the dressing, whizz 25g of watercress, the mint, oil, vinegar and plenty of seasoning in a small food processor until smooth. Tip the couscous into a heatproof bowl and cover with 400ml boiling water. Cover with cling film and leave for 3-4 mins. Remove the cling film and fluff up with a fork.
3 Meanwhile, bring a small pan of water to the boil, add the peas and cook for 3 mins. Mix half the dressing, the peas and remaining watercress into the couscous. Top with the meatballs and serve with the remaining dressing, the pomegranate seeds and yoghurt.

PER SERVING 641 kcals • fat 32g • saturates 13g • carbs 48g • sugars 7g • fibre 4g • protein 38g • salt 1.2g



Halloumi & red cabbage steaks

SERVES 4 **PREP** 15 mins **COOK** 40 mins
EASY V FIBRE VIT C 1 OF 5 A DAY GLUTEN FREE

1 small red cabbage (about 900g), cut into 4 x 2cm thick 'steaks'
2 tbsp balsamic vinegar
2 tbsp olive oil
1 tsp fennel seeds
1 tbsp dark muscovado sugar
2 x 250g pouches ready-cooked quinoa
juice 1 orange
small pack flat-leaf parsley, chopped
small pack dill, chopped
50g dried sour cherries, roughly chopped
250g pack halloumi, cut into 8 slices

1 Heat oven to 200C/180C fan. Line a baking tray with baking parchment and put the cabbage steaks on top. Mix together the balsamic, oil, fennel seeds and sugar, then season and spoon it over the cabbage. Cover the cabbage with foil and roast for 20 mins, then remove the foil and cook for a further 10 mins until softened
2 Heat the quinoa following pack instructions, then stir through the orange juice, parsley, dill and cherries, and season with black pepper. Fry the halloumi in a dry pan on a medium heat for 2 mins each side until golden. To serve, place a spoonful of quinoa onto each cabbage steak and top with the halloumi.

PER SERVING 658 kcals • fat 30g • saturates 12g • carbs 66g • sugars 24g • fibre 11g • protein 25g • salt 3.0g



Smoky pork & Boston beans one-pot

SERVES 4 **PREP** 15 mins **COOK** 40 mins
EASY LOW CAL 2 OF 5 A DAY P

2 tbsp olive oil
2 garlic cloves, crushed
2 tbsp smoked paprika
500g pork loin steaks, quartered
2 x 400g cans cannellini beans, drained and rinsed
400g passata
2 tsp chipotle paste
1 tbsp dark soft brown sugar
100g ham hock, in large shreds
4 slices crusty white bread
small handful flat-leaf parsley, roughly chopped

1 Heat oven to 180C/160C fan. Mix the oil, garlic and paprika together and rub into the pork. In a large, shallow ovenproof dish, mix the cannellini beans, passata, chipotle, sugar and ham hock. Nestle the pork into the beans. Bake in the oven for 40 mins until the pork is cooked through.
2 Toast the bread and serve on the side. Sprinkle the parsley over the pork and beans to serve.

PER SERVING 475 kcals • fat 15g • saturates 4g • carbs 40g • sugars 12g • fibre 3g • protein 44g • salt 1.8g

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National day nibbles

This month marks the UAE's 44th National Day and in honour of the occasion, BBC Good Foods *Middle East* shares some delicious Middle Eastern recipes from Al Nafoorah's chef de cuisine, chef Bilal Saleh. Photographs MAKSYM PORIECHKIN

National day is on December 2



Hummous Beiruti, recipe p44

Compiled by SURENA CHANDE | Props courtesy of CRATE & BARREL MALL OF THE EMIRATES
Photo-shoot location courtesy of AL NAFOORAH, 04 432 3232


Chicken liver with pomegranate sauce, recipe p44



Sharhat Motfeyh, recipe p44



Raheb salad (Baba Ghanouj)

1kg eggplant
1 tomato
Mixed peppers chopped, the equivalent of one chopped pepper
1 bunch parsley, chopped

1 Slice the eggplant, then grill it over fire – preferably directly over fire in order to allow the skin to burn and to give it a smoky flavour.
2 Leave it on the fire until it has been cooked through, then drop it into a bowl with cooled ice water until cooled.
3 Dice all of the vegetables into small cubes.
4 Peel the eggplant and lightly squeeze it to get the water out.
5 Chop it into medium-sized pieces then blend it with the rest of the ingredients.
6 Serve in a bowl with chopped vegetables and pomegranate seeds to garnish, along with a drizzle of olive oil if desired.



Mohamara

1 onion
100g sweet chilli paste
50g bread crumbs
20ml olive oil
1/2 tbsp cumin powder
1 tbsp pomegranate molasses
50g whole nuts, to garnish

1 Bake the onion in the oven on a medium to high heat until cooked. Let it cool, then peel and dice it.
2 In a mixing bowl, mix all of the ingredients together except the nuts.
3 In a separate bowl, crush most of the nuts leaving some whole for garnishing.
4 Pour the mixture into a plate in a straight line, then garnish the dish with whole nuts and olive oil. Serve cold.

Hummous Beiruti

300g boiled chickpeas
1/4 cup crushed ice
1 tsp salt
1 clove garlic
100g tahini (sesame paste)
25ml lemon juice
1 bunch parsley, chopped
2 small green chillies, chopped
20ml olive oil
Mint leaves, for garnishing

1 Grind and blend the chickpeas in a food processor with crushed ice, salt and garlic until it forms a fine puree of a hommos-like texture.
2 Add tahini and lemon juice, mix well until smooth.
3 In a bowl, mix the hommous with chopped parsley and chilli.
4 Pour the mixture into a serving bowl and create a pattern with the back of a spoon, then add olive oil and garnish with mint leaves.

Tip

Flavours can be added to the hommous such as spices, chili, meat and pine seeds.

Chicken liver with pomegranate sauce

600g fresh chicken liver
15g garlic
100ml pomegranate sauce
1/2 tsp sea salt
1/2 tsp white pepper
30ml water
50ml sunflower oil

1 Clean fresh chicken livers and cut into small bite-sized pieces.
2 To make the sauce, crush the garlic and add it to the pomegranate sauce. Add salt, pepper and water and stir.
3 In a pan, heat the sunflower oil well and add the chicken liver, keep it cooking for 4 mins then turn and cook the other side for 4 mins.
4 Add sauce to the pan and let it thicken a little.
5 Pour into serving plate and serve immediately.

Sharhat Motfeyh

300g beef tenderloin
50ml lemon juice
15ml orange juice
10g mashed garlic
Pinch of sea salt
Pinch of black pepper

1 For the sauce, crush the garlic and add it to the orange and lemon juice. Add salt and pepper and stir.
2Slice the tenderloin into thin slices that are about 1/4 cm thick.
3 Pre-heat a non-stick pan, then add sliced beef tenderloin and sauté for a minute on each side until it gets a nice, caramelised colour.
4 Add the pre-made sauce as dressing and remove from the heat.
5 Pour into a serving plate and serve immediately.

Tip

For well-done beef, keep the sliced meat cooking for 2 mins on each side.



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Home for the holidays

'Tis the season for sharing festive favourites and creating new ones for generations to come. No matter the type of get-together you're hosting at home this year, we've got a selection of recipes prepared by The Hide's head chef, Brian Voelzing, to ensure family and friends are kept happy over the holidays.



Meet the chef

With a passion for home cooked food, head chef Brian Voelzing, showcases his food at Al Qasr Hotel's latest restaurant, The Hide – Dubai's first modern American meatery. The chef creates boldly flavoured, deeply satisfying dishes with an emphasis on quality meat selections. For the festive season, he shared some irristably delicious dishes with us for you to try at home.

Beef ribeye, port glazed shallots and blue cheese gratin, recipe p52

Text by SOPHIE MCCARRICK | Photographs MAKSYM PORIECHKIN



Creamy parsnip soup with wild mushrooms, recipe p49

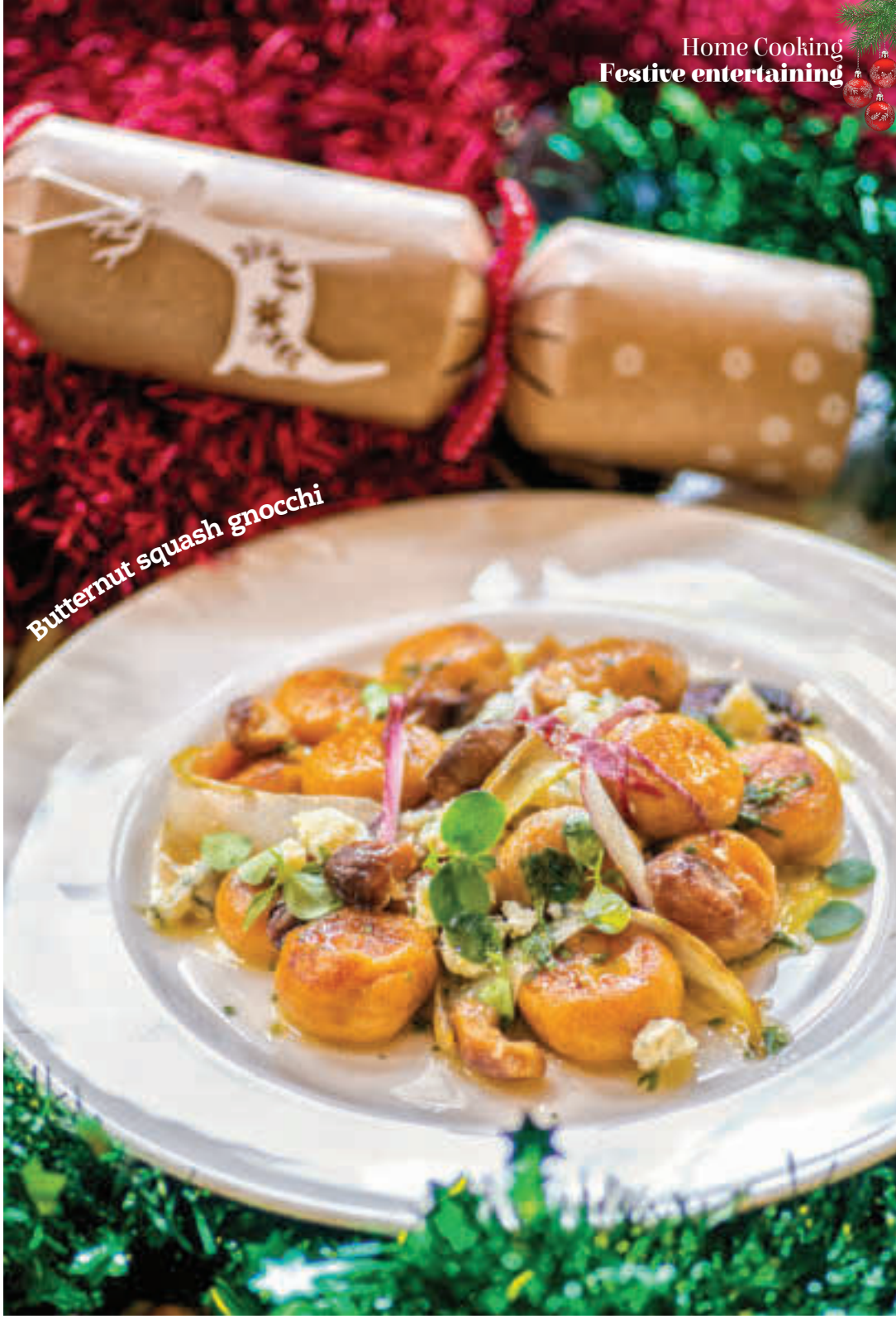
Creamy parsnip soup with wild mushrooms

SERVES 6 **PREP** 25 mins **COOK** 40 mins

800g parsnip, peeled and cut into chunks
50ml grapeseed oil
½ tbsp salt
150g onion, sliced
50g unsalted butter
1lt vegetable broth
100ml cooking cream
1 tbsp salt
150g mixed wild mushrooms, cleaned and sliced
25g unsalted butter
1 tsp salt
1 tbsp chives
Olive oil, to serve

1 Preheat oven to 180C and toss parsnip with grapeseed oil and 1 tbsp salt. Place the parsnip evenly on a baking sheet and roast for 25 minutes or until tender and lightly golden in colour.
2 Meanwhile, sweat the onion in 50g butter until translucent. Add the vegetable broth and bring to simmer. Remove the parsnip from the oven and place in the simmering broth and cook until tender.
3 Add the cream and 3 tbsp salt then blend the soup mix until smooth and set aside.
4 Cook the mushrooms in the butter until tender and finish with salt and chives. Serve with a drizzle of olive oil.

Butternut squash gnocchi



SERVES 6 **PREP** 1 hour 30 mins **COOK** 30 mins

1000g Idaho potatoes, whole
500g butternut squash, halved
2lts water
1 tbsp salt
3 tbsp Parmesan, finely grated
¼ tsp nutmeg
¼ tsp cinnamon
1 egg
300g flour
Ice bath, large bowl
30g vegetable oil
30g unsalted butter
200g endive
200g blue cheese
100g chestnuts
Pinch of chives

1 Preheat the oven to 180C and on a roasting tray and roast the potatoes and butternut squash for 45 minutes or until tender.
2 In a large pan, bring the water to a boil.
3 Meanwhile, run the potatoes and squash through a sieve and combine with salt, Parmesan, nutmeg, cinnamon, egg and flour to create a dough. Roll the dough into long tubes and cut into small pieces. Roll each piece into a ball and press with a fork to create the gnocchi shape.
4 Drop the gnocchi balls into the boiling water, and when the gnocchi floats refresh it in an ice bath.
5 Bring a nonstick pan to medium-low heat and cook the gnocchi in the vegetable oil for 2 minutes on each side, until golden.
6 In another pan melt 30g butter and sauté the endive, adding the blue cheese towards the end of cooking to create a sauce. Combine the gnocchi with the blue cheese and endive and plate the dish. Serve with chopped chestnuts and a sprinkle of chives. >>


Christmas turducken roll, recipe p52



Apple crumble, recipe p52



Beef ribeye, port glazed shallots and blue cheese gratin

SERVES 6 **PREP** 1 hour **COOK** 45 mins

FOR THE PORT GLAZED SHALLOTS
2 tbsp vegetable oil
9 large shallots, halved with skins on
300ml port
1 tsp salt
1 tbsp honey
3 sprigs thyme
1 clove garlic
FOR THE GRATIN AND RIBEYE
40g unsalted butter
1 garlic clove, chopped
1 shallot, chopped
500g cooking cream
3 sprigs of thyme
100g blue cheese
1 tbsp salt
1 tbsp pepper
600g potatoes, thinly sliced
6 x 300g ribeye steaks

1 Heat a saucepan to medium-high heat and add vegetable oil.
2 Sear the shallots in the oil and add remaining ingredients. Reduce the port down with the shallots until tender glazed. Remove from the pan and reserve.
3 Preheat the oven to 180C. Melt half of the butter and sweat off the garlic and shallot in a large pan. Add cream, thyme and blue cheese and slowly simmer for several minutes before straining and seasoning with salt and pepper.
4 Butter a baking tray and lay out the sliced potatoes evenly, topping it with cream mixture before continuing to layer the potatoes and top with more cream.
5 Cover the baking tray with tinfoil and bake in the oven for 40 minutes. Remove the tinfoil and cook for another 15 minutes or until the top of the gratin is golden brown.
6 On a hot grill, cook the ribeye steaks to medium rare for 3-5 minutes on each side, or until desired temperature.
7 Reheat the shallots in the oven for 6 minutes while the steak rests for half of the cooking time. When the steaks are finished resting, plate with shallots and gratin on the side.



Christmas turducken roll

SERVES 6 **PREP** 1 day for marinating + 5 hours **COOK** 3 hours + 1 hour 30 minutes

500g duck leg
3 cloves of garlic, sliced
1 shallot, sliced
5 thyme sprigs
3 tbsp salt
1 tbsp cracked black pepper
900ml duck fat
350g skinless boneless chicken breast, cubed
2 egg whites
300ml double cream
½ tbsp salt
½ tbsp black pepper
1 tbsp chives, chopped
1 tbsp parsley, chopped
1kg turkey breast, whole
Salt and pepper, to season
100g Iberico smoked beef, thinly sliced
½ tbsp salt
½ tbsp pepper
2 tbsp vegetable oil

1 Mix the duck leg with the garlic, shallot, thyme, salt and pepper and leave covered in the fridge overnight.
2 The following day, preheat the oven to 110C brush off the legs, place them into a large pot and cover in duck fat. Cook for 3 hours at 110C.
3 Remove the duck legs from the fat, allow for cooling and remove meat from the bone. Reserve for later.
4 In a food processor combine chicken, egg white, cream, salt and pepper and blend until smooth. Add the chives and parsley then mix well. Set aside.
5 To tenderise the turkey, place the breasts between two layers of cling film before using a meat tenderiser forcefully to ensure the turkey breast becomes flattened and the same width all the way across. Remove only the top layer of cling film and lightly season with salt and pepper. Place a thin layer of the Iberico beef across the turkey.
6 Using a spatula place a thick layer of the chicken mix evenly over the Iberico beef so that it is just inside the perimeter of the turkey.
7 Using the reserved duck confit, make a thick line shape running across the top of the chicken.
8 To form the roll, use the cling film under the turkey to roll the meat over into a cylinder shape. Keep rolling until the roll is tightened and the turkey is compacted. Tie the ends of the cling film to ensure it holds shape.
9 Put a kitchen towel into a roasting pan and place the turkey on top. Fill the roasting pan half way up with warm water so that the turkey is surrounded.
10 Cover tightly in two layers of aluminum foil and place in oven at 160C for 1 hour. Remove from the oven and allow cooling for 30 minutes.
11 Unwrap the turkey and season with salt and pepper before searing in a large pan with vegetable oil until golden. Serve in slices.



Apple crumble

SERVES 6 **PREP** 1 day + 1 hour 30 mins **COOK** 30 mins

FOR THE APPLE FILLING
1000g apples, peeled and sliced
250g sugar
40g cornstarch
1 vanilla bean, ground
1tsp nutmeg, ground
1tsp cinnamon, ground
1tsp salt
50g butter
FOR THE CRUMBLE
100g pecans, chopped
200g flour
100g rolled oats
100g brown sugar
1 tsp cinnamon
½ tsp nutmeg
8 tbsp butter

1 For the apple filling, combine all of the listed ingredients, except the butter. Mix well and leave overnight in the fridge.
2 The following day strain off the apples and reserve the liquid. Put the butter into a large saucepan on a medium heat and add the apples. Gently cook until slightly tender.
3 Reduce the reserved liquid by half and combine with the apples before allowing cooling. Set aside.
4 Preheat the oven to 160C. For the crumble, combine all of the listed ingredients together and mix well into a crumb.
5 Line a baking pan with butter and add the reserved apple mix. Top the apple mix with the crumb and bake for 30 minutes or until golden in colour. Serve with vanilla ice cream.

Magical Christmas and a Shimmering New Year



It is time once again to ring in the festive season.

A full and glittering calendar of events await, starting with a Christmas-inspired celebration which include festive goodies, takeaway turkey, Christmas Eve Dinner, Christmas Day Brunch and a glamorous 1001 Nights themed New Year's Eve party.

For reservations please contact the festive desk in the hotel lobby at **04 449 8781** or email us at **Hotel.Jumeirahbeach.FB@moevenpick.com**

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The Irish Village Dubai

presents

Irish Dance Reborn



Live at The Dubai Duty Free Tennis Stadium

Friday, 11th December 2015

Doors Open : 7:00 p.m.
Show Starts : 9:00 p.m.
Tickets : **AEd 175** net per Adult • **AED 125** net for Children below 11 years old
Tickets available at Tixbox, Virgin Megastore and The Irish Village

For more information, call: 04 282 4750

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nollaig shona dhaoibh!
Merry Christmas!

Festive Season

Christmas Tree Lighting

The only way to kick off your festive season:
On Monday, 7th December 2015 the traditional Christmas tree lighting at The Irish Village:
Choir and carols, mulled wine
and home baked mince pies.
Children are welcome
From 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

The 12 Days to Christmas…

From Sunday 13th December.
Counting the twelve days to Christmas at The Irish Village with the traditional roast & trimmings
and Christmas pudding.
AED 135 net for a 3-course meal, lunch or dinner
Daily from 12:00 noon to 11:00 p.m.
Enjoy your company party at The Irish Village

Christmas Eve

Thursday 24th December
A night out ….. simply! Free entry.
Festive ambience and music with The Maplejasks and DJ Marky Mark

For information: +9714 282 4750

Christmas Day Lunch

Friday 25th December
Christmas Day at The Irish Village…
a family ambience.
A festive buffet laden with traditional Christmas goodies, carvery, turkey & trimmings and lots more
And a visit from Santa!
Live music.
From 12:00 to 4:00 p.m.
AED 199 net per person
AED 99 net for children below 12,
Including a gift from Santa.
Reservation Only. Book your tables now!

New Year's Eve Party
The Irish Village

Thursday 31st December
A spectacular array of food stations, laden with festive specialities, music and dance all night with the MapleJacks and DJ Marky Mark
Ticket includes food only.
AED 200
Tickets available at The Irish Village, Platinum List, Tixbox and Virgin Megastore

NOMAD

AED 700 All Inclusive

The Irish Village Dubai



15 ways to reinvent the holidays

We all love traditions of the festive period – but that doesn't mean there isn't room for a few twists and surprises to keep the occasion truly up to date!

Photograph DAVID MUNNS | Food styling SARAH COOK | Styling VICTORIA ALLEN

Turn over for recipes »

Mince pies get a makeover

Try a lighter version of this festive favourite classic.



1 MINCEMEAT SAMOSAS

MAKES 18 **PREP** 1 1/2 hrs plus soaking **COOK** 15-20 mins

EASY

1 cooking apple, peeled, cored and finely chopped
zest and juice 1 orange
50g dried ready-to-eat apricots, chopped
25g shelled pistachios
50g dried cranberries
175g sultanas
1 tsp cinnamon
1/2 tsp grated nutmeg
2 tbsp brandy
1 tbsp clear honey
50g/2oz butter, melted and kept warm
6 sheets filo pastry (270g pack)
icing sugar, to decorate

1 Mix together the fruit, dried fruit, nuts, spices and brandy. Leave the mixture in the fridge for 30 mins to allow the flavours to develop, then stir in the honey. Heat oven to 200C/180C fan. Arrange the filo sheets with the short side facing you and, using scissors, cut the stack in 3 vertically, to make long strips. Brush the top 3 strips with melted butter.
2 Working quickly, put 1 heaped spoonful of mincemeat at the top of the first strip. Fold one corner of the pastry over it to form a triangle, then continue folding alternately left and right to form a triangular package, until you've used up all the strip. Repeat with the other strips, brushing with butter before folding.
3 Place on a baking sheet and brush each one with more melted butter. Bake for 15-20 mins until crisp and golden. Dust with icing sugar and serve warm (reheat later in a low oven if necessary).

PER SAMOSA 126 kcals • protein 2g • carbs 20g • fat 3g • sat fat 2g • fibre 1g • sugar 12g • salt 0.2g

2 MOVE OVER, MINCEMEAT

Three variations on the classic!

Mini Bakewells

MAKES ENOUGH for 12 tartlets **PREP** 15 mins **COOK** 15 mins

EASY P GLUTEN FREE

Heat oven to 190C/170C fan. Divide **50g raspberry jam** between 12 uncooked tartlet cases. Beat **100g softened butter** with **100g golden caster sugar**, then gradually beat in **2 eggs** followed by **100g ground almonds** and **25g flour**. Sprinkle with a few **flaked almonds** and bake for 15-20 mins.

PER TARTLET 310 kcals • protein 5g • carbs 24g • fat 21g • sat fat 8g • fibre 1g • sugar 13g • salt 0.2g

Mini Mont Blancs

MAKES ENOUGH for 12 tartlets **PREP** 10 mins **NO COOK** EASY GLUTEN FREE

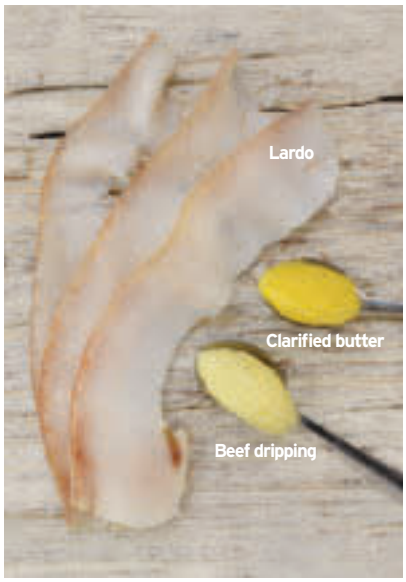
Mix **200g chestnut purée** with **2 tbsp icing sugar** and **1/2 tsp vanilla extract**. Divide between 12 baked tartlet cases. Whip **200ml double cream**, spoon onto the tarts, then grate over dark chocolate to finish.

PER TARTLET 258 kcals • protein 2g • carbs 18g • fat 19g • sat fat 10g • fibre 2g • sugar 7g • salt 0.1g



On-trend flavours

Mix things up this year and sprinkle something a little different on your food.



3 FABULOUS FATS

It's easy to go on autopilot when reaching for cooking fats – but they do make a subtle difference to your result. Everyone loves potatoes roasted in goose fat, but it doesn't stop there…

CLARIFIED BUTTER Can be heated to a higher temperature than regular butter, which means it is a luxurious medium for frying; it also makes a superior hollandaise or Béarnaise sauce. You can clarify your own by gently warming 250g unsalted butter, then straining into a small jug and discarding the white whey that collects at the bottom. Alternatively, buy a 250g pot of Lurpak Cook's Range Clarified Butter (from larger supermarkets).

BEEF DRIPPING The traditional choice for Yorkshire puddings. It also makes superb chips.

LARDO First it was bacon lardons, then it was cubed pancetta. The latest porky treat to wow the food world is lardo – strips of Italian pork fat cured with herbs and spices. It is so tasty that you can eat it shaved on toast. An alternative for cooking is a jar of Ibérico fat.

4 INSTANT PICK-ME-UPS

Have fun adding a secret ingredient to classic recipes – it could soon become your signature dish:

★ **DRIED CHILLI FLAKES**
To cut through richness, rather than add heat. Sprinkle on the turkey instead of pepper, on potatoes, gratins and sprouts.

★ **SOY SAUCE**
Baste the turkey with it, splash it in gravy or over green beans.

★ **SPRING ONIONS**
Finely shredded, they give a lift to carrots, peas and other vegetables. Melt a knob of butter in a pan, stir in the onions for 1-2 minutes, then mix in the vegetables.

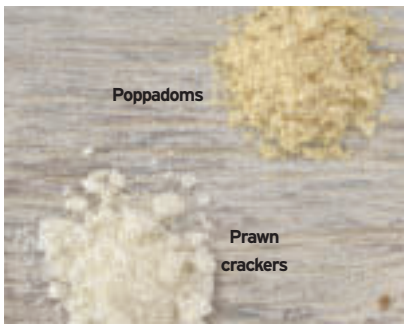
5 SPRINKLE A LITTLE MAGIC

An instant way to liven up the appearance and texture of a dish is to sprinkle on a topping before or after cooking. You can make a quick topping by crushing different snacks.

The easiest way to crush evenly is to put your ingredients in a bag and roll them with a rolling pin (bashing them will give you a mixture of dust and big bits). When it comes to sprinkling, do it from well above the dish – you'll find it lands far more evenly. Try these:

PRAWN CRACKERS Adds a finishing touch to that most glamorous of breakfast dishes –kedgeree – as well as fish or soups.

POPPADOMS Sprinkle over vegetarian meals and Asian dishes.



Photographs DANTE FERRIS and ADRIAN TAYLOR | Food styling JULIA AZZARELLO



6 GLORIOUS BUTTERS

Flavoured butters take minutes to make but they're so useful, and will add a new slant to favourite dishes. Stir the butter into veg, use to top meats or fish, add to soups and sauces for luxury and sheen, or spread on brown bread to serve with smoked salmon.

The possibilities are endless, but the basic technique is the same. Bring unsalted butter to room temperature (if you are in a hurry, cut into small pieces and leave while you prepare other ingredients – by the time you need it, the butter will be soft). Beat in all the ingredients, shape into a small log, then chill or freeze. Once cold, wrap in cling film. Slice off discs as you need them.

Flavoured butters keep for a week in the fridge, or two months in the freezer.

UMAMI BUTTER Combine **250g unsalted butter** with a good pinch of **sea salt flakes**, **1 tsp umami paste**, **pepper or dust**. Umami seasonings – which give a rich, meaty flavour, reminiscent of mushrooms, Parmesan and soy sauce – vary, so taste carefully. Use on meats and veg to add savouriness.

BLUE CHEESE & SAGE BUTTER P
Use **250g unsalted butter** and mix in **sea salt flakes** and **paprika**, plus **75g crumbled Stilton** or other **strong blue cheese** and **1-2 tbsp chopped sage**. A super-tasty way to infuse steak or pork chops with a taste of Christmas, or even spread on toast for a late-night snack.

RED PEPPER & SMOKED PAPRIKA BUTTER Chop **1 roasted red pepper** from a jar, **2 tbsp thyme** and **2 tsp smoked mild paprika** and beat into **250g unsalted butter** with **sea salt** and **black pepper**. Lovely with chicken, on an omelette, or use to perk up everyday meals over the festive period.

HERB BUTTER Mix **250g unsalted butter**, a good pinch of **sea salt flakes**, plenty of coarsely ground **black pepper**, **grated lemon zest**, **½ garlic clove**, crushed, and **3-4 tbsp chopped tarragon** or **parsley**, or **1-2 tbsp chopped thyme**, **sage** or **rosemary** (it's best to limit the mix to 2 herbs). Great with meats, fish and veg.

7 DAZZLE WITH DRIZZLES

Give a dish a restaurant-style finish with a drizzle. Balsamic glaze and pomegranate molasses are both perfect on savoury canapés, salmon and grilled meats.

★ Alternatively, make a **JAPANESE-STYLE GLAZE** for a pork roast by mixing **3 tbsp sake**, **3 tbsp mirin**, **3 tbsp miso paste**, **3 tbsp sugar**, **2 tsp mustard**, **1 tsp vinegar** and a dash of **sesame oil**. Glaze before cooking and serve the rest drizzled over.

★ To make a **CHRISTMAS SPICE SYRUP** to pour over fruits, ice cream, pancakes or French toast, put **250ml water** in a pan with **200g sugar** and simmer until dissolved. Add **½ vanilla pod**, **split**, sliced thumb-sized piece ginger, zest **½ orange** and spices of your choice (for instance, a **cinnamon stick** or **6 cloves**) and simmer for 5 mins. Strain, then cool. *Will keep in a jar in the fridge for up to 2 weeks.*



Glamorous drinks

Here are four imaginative cocktail twists using Prosecco – a party favourite at this time of year – and some unusual mixers.

8 JAZZ UP THE BEVERAGES

Give your drinks an added edge this year with these useful tips.

★ For a **ROSE-ECCO** (invented by Sophie Dahl), fill a glass with a fizz of your liking and pour **1 tbsp rose syrup** down the inside of the glass so that it slides to the bottom.

★ For a **HIBISCUS PROSECCO**, put a **hibiscus flower** with **1 tsp of its syrup** in the bottom of a glass, and pour over fizz. Don't discard the flower – it tastes of **raspberry** and **rhubarb**.

★ Make a **SBAGLIATO** by mixing **4 parts fizz, 1 part sweet vermouth** and **1 part Campari**. Serve with a twist of **orange zest**.

★ Serve **FORAGER'S FIZZ** – a splash of **sloe gin** and a **blackberry** or two, topped up with **fizz.** »



Rethink your roast

Here are some fresh ways to ensure your bird cooks beautifully on the big day.

9 GAME FOR THE OCCASION

If you're not a large party, look beyond a classic turkey crown or roast and try another bird.

- **4.5kg goose will serve 6**
- A capon will serve 4-5
- **A duck will serve 2-3**
- A guinea fowl will serve 2
- **A pheasant will serve 2**
- Allow one poussin, one partridge or one wild duck per person for a main course
- **You'll need two quails per person for a main course**

10 A NEW CHOICE FOR CHEESE



Turn family traditions on their head and serve a baked cheese instead of a cheeseboard. Buy a ceramic Cheese Baker, ideal for Brie or Camembert, or check out the recipe for Baked cheese with herbs at bbcgoodfoodme.com, in which Cornish Brie is baked in a box.When the cheese is hot and melty, scoop it out with your favourite savoury biscuits.

11 GETTING LEGLESS

Cooking the turkey legs and breast separately. Chop off the legs, then thighs. Brown well in oil in a large flameproof casserole dish, then remove. In the same dish, brown a few onions and carrots and a stick of celery, all roughly chopped, in the remaining oil. Add 6 garlic cloves, crushed, and 1 bay leaf, then half a bottle of white wine. Bring to the boil, scraping up the browned bits, return the turkey to the dish and add boiling water so the bird is half covered. Cover with a piece of baking parchment and the lid to keep moist, and simmer for 2-3 hrs, turning occasionally. Remove the turkey, strain the juices and reduce if necessary by simmering until gravy-like. Take the breasts off the carcass and roast with butter, herbs and seasoning pushed between the skin and the flesh in an oven heated to 220C/200C fan for 45-50 mins until they are cooked, and reach 72-74C on a cooking thermometer.



12 COOK ON THE BBQ

Christmas is the one day of the year when you're likely to run out of oven space. One option is to use your barbecue – if you have a gas or kettle barbecue, you can treat it as another heat source. From cooking the turkey to a twist on roast potatoes, anything you normally cook in the oven will be just as good this way.

Leftovers go luxe

Don't save your leftovers until the last guest has left. Make them part of your dinner party menu.

13 CHRISTMAS CAKE SOUFFLÉS

SERVES 4 **PREP** 20 mins **COOK** 15 mins
A LITTLE EFFORT

butter, for greasing
1 tbsp golden caster sugar, plus extra
4 medium egg whites
150ml ready-made custard
85g fruitcake, Christmas cake or pudding, finely crumbled
caramel sauce, to serve

1 Heat oven to 180C/160C fa and put in a baking tray to heat up. Grease 4 x 150ml ramekins, then add some sugar to each and shake to coat before tipping out the excess.



2 Whisk the egg whites until stiff peaks form, then add the sugar and continue whisking until stiff again. In a big mixing bowl, stir together the custard and crumbled cake. Stir in a quarter of the egg whites, and very gently fold in the rest using a spoon until the mixture isn't too streaky.
3 Divide the mixture between the ramekins, running your finger around the top inside of each to leave a 'gap' between the mixture and the ramekin just at the very top. Bake for 12-15 mins until risen and golden.
4 Serve the hot soufflés with jugs of warm caramel sauce for people to pour into theirs.

PER SERVING 158 kcals • protein 5g • carbs 24g • fat 5g • sat fat 1g • fibre 1g • sugar 20g • salt 0.3g

14 POTTED SALMON RILLETTE

SERVES 4 **PREP** 10 mins plus 2 hrs chilling
NO COOK EASY

100g cream cheese
100g crème fraîche, soured cream, double or whipping cream
100g smoked salmon trimmings, half diced, plus extra to decorate (optional)
2-3 tsp creamed horseradish
lemon wedge
few dill sprigs, to decorate (optional)
Melba toast, crackers or toasted rye bread, and a few leaves, to serve



1 Put the cream cheese, the creams, 50g salmon, 2 tsp horseradish and a small squeeze of lemon juice in a food processor or blender. Whizz until smooth, then scrape into a mixing bowl. Fold in the remaining salmon, then add seasoning if needed. Divide the mixture between 4 small ramekins and chill for at least 2 hrs.
2 Before serving, decorate the rillettes with a spiral of salmon or a few dill sprigs. Add a pot to a plate with a few leaves and some crunchy Melba toast and serve.

PER SERVING 244 kcals • protein 8g • carbs 1g • fat 23g • sat fat 14g • fibre none • sugar 1g • salt 1.5g

15 Change of strategy

The person who takes most of the strain is the cook. Make this year different with one simple but very effective alteration to your day: eat later in the day, and keep timings flexible. Dinner is a complex operation, so eat at a time that suits you, and give yourself plenty of leeway. If you plan to eat at 3pm, for example, tell everyone it will be ready between 3-4pm, and firm up timings when the turkey is cooked.



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Watch George's story in the Wish Upon A Star short film on Shangri-La's Facebook page

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Present swap party

Jane Hornby's help-yourself food is just the thing for a laidback gathering to exchange gifts with friends over the festive season

Photographs MYLES NEW



Food styling REBECCA NEWPORT | Styling JENNIFER JOYCE

Winter leaf, date & olive salad

SERVES 6-8 **PREP** 15 mins **NO COOK**

EASY V 1 OF 5 A DAY GLUTEN FREE

2 lemons
1 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
1 tbsp sunflower or other mild oil
1 tbsp white or red wine vinegar
1 tsp clear honey
handful green olives, stones removed, torn in half
10 plump dates (I used hadrawi), stoned and cut into long slivers
85g feta, crumbled
100g bag baby spinach
2 large or 4 small heads chicory (red or white) separated into leaves

1 Thinly slice the peel and pith from the lemons, then segment. Squeeze 1 tbsp of the juice into a bowl. Whisk in the oils, vinegar, honey and seasoning.

2 Put the lemon segments, olives, dates and feta into a large bowl, and put the leaves on top. Cover and chill until ready to eat. Toss with the dressing to serve.

PER SERVING (6) 108 kcals • protein 3g • carbs 6g • fat 8g • sat fat 3g • fibre 2g • sugar 6g • salt 0.8g »



Hot herb butter prawns

SERVES 6-8 as a starter
PREP 10 mins **COOK** 5 mins
EASY GLUTEN FREE

20 large king prawns, peeled but with the tails left on
2 tsp rose harissa
½ x 125g pack garlic butter
small pack flat-leaf parsley, chopped
1 tsp capers, drained and finely chopped
1 lemon, zested then cut into wedges, and Mediterranean-style flatbreads (or gluten-free alternative), to serve

1 Butterfly the prawns, removing the black thread that runs through the body. Beat the butter until smooth, then mix in the harissa, parsley, capers, lemon zest and some ground black pepper. Can be made 2 weeks in advance, then chilled.
2 Open out each prawn and smear 1 tsp of the butter into the middle. Can be made 1 day ahead and chilled.
3 When ready to eat, heat the grill to as high as it will go. Put the prawns on a baking tray and grill for 5 mins until they are pink through. Toast the flatbreads, then serve with the hot prawns and lemon wedges for squeezing over.

PER SERVING 107 kcals • protein 6g • carbs 0.6g • fat 9g • sat fat 6g • fibre none • sugar 1g • salt 0.4g

TIP **To make your own garlic butter, soften 4 tbsp butter and add 1-2 crushed garlic cloves. It will keep well in the fridge for a few weeks.**



Cranberry & chestnut falafel

SERVES 6-8 as a nibble (makes about 20) **PREP** 20 mins **COOK** 15 mins EASY V 1 OF 5 A DAY GOOD 4 YOU

1 sweet potato, peeled and chunked
400g can chickpeas, drained
200g ready-cooked, vacuum-packed chestnuts
1 large egg
½ tsp chilli flakes
2 tsp cumin seeds
1 garlic clove
small pack coriander, roughly chopped, plus a little more to serve
85g cranberries, defrosted if frozen and halved
4 tbsp vegetable or sunflower oil
150g pot creamy Greek-style yoghurt, to serve

1 Put the sweet potato into a microwave-proof bowl, add 1 tsp water and cook on High for 2 mins. Mash in a large bowl.
2 Put the chickpeas and chestnuts into a food processor and pulse until well chopped but not pasty. Tip on top of the sweet potato, then add the egg, spices, garlic and coriander. Season generously and mix well with your hands. Add the cranberries. Shape dessertspoon-sized balls of the mix into 20 or so patties. *Can be made ahead and chilled for up to 3 days.*
3 Heat 2 tbsp oil in a large non-stick frying pan. Fry half of the falafels for 2 mins on each side until golden. Lift onto kitchen paper to drain. Repeat with the second batch. *Can be made up to 2 days ahead and reheated.* Let the falafel cool for a few mins before serving with the yoghurt, plus a scattering of coriander.

PER SERVING (6) 214 kcals • protein 6g • carbs 25g • fat 10g • sat fat 1g • fibre 6g • sugar 4g • salt 0.4g



Golden pilaf with sizzling merguez

SERVES 6-8 as a starter
PREP 10 mins **COOK** 40 mins
EASY 1 OF 5 A DAY P

1 butternut squash, deseeded and cut into bite-sized pieces (do not peel)
2 onions, halved, then thinly sliced
1 tbsp sunflower or vegetable oil
25g butter
1 tsp ground cinnamon
1 tsp ground nutmeg
1 tbsp sundried tomato paste
300g basmati rice, soaked for 20 mins, then rinsed well
600ml vegetable or chicken stock
500g merguez sausages (around 12 thin merguez), or chorizo if you can't find them

TO SERVE
large pack mint leaves, torn
50g pistachio nuts, roughly chopped
Roasted pepper & harissa sauce (see recipe, right)
170g pot Greek yoghurt

1 Heat oven to 220C/200C fan. Toss the squash, a quarter of the sliced onions and the oil in a large roasting tin, season, then roast for 20 mins.
2 Meanwhile, melt the butter in a large pan and add the rest of the onions, plus some seasoning. Gently cook for 15 mins until tender and turning gold.
3 Add the cinnamon and nutmeg to the onions. Toast for 1 min, then add the tomato paste and rice, and sizzle for a few mins. Pour in the stock and bring to the boil. Stir the rice, then cover and simmer for 10 mins. Take the pan off the heat and set aside for 10 mins more to let the rice become fluffy and light.
4 Toss the squash and onions, then return to the oven for 20 mins. Put the merguez into the oven in a separate tin and roast for 20 mins. The squash will be tender by this point, and the onions very crisp (verging on burnt – in a good way!).
5 When ready to serve, slice the sausages on an angle. Toss the squash, onions, sausage, mint and pistachios through the rice and serve with the sauce and a dollop of yoghurt.

PER SERVING (6) 532 kcals • protein 23g • carbs 50g • fat 25g • sat fat 11g • fibre 3g • sugar 9g • salt 1.6g

Roasted pepper & harissa sauce

SERVES 6-8 **PREP** 10 mins **COOK** 15 mins
EASY V LOW FAT 1 OF 5 A DAY GOOD 4 YOU

Drain a **290g jar chargrilled red peppers**, reserving **1 tbsp of the oil**. Fry **1 crushed fat garlic clove** in the oil for 1 min, then add **2 heaped tbsp sundried tomato paste** and **1 heaped tbsp rose harissa paste** (I used Belazu). Tip in the peppers, a **400g can plum tomatoes** and a third of a can of water. Simmer for 10 mins, then blend with a stick blender or processor, leaving a little texture. Season to taste.

PER SERVING (6) 37 kcals • protein 1g • carbs 3g • fat 2g • sat fat none • fibre 1g • sugar 3g • salt 0.1g

‘Panforte’ pies

MAKES 12 **PREP** 15 mins plus chilling **COOK** 30 mins
EASY

140g mixed shelled and blanched nuts such as pistachios, hazelnuts, almonds and cashews
375g pack ready-made sweet shortcrust pastry
plain flour, for dusting
50g butter
50g dark brown muscovado sugar
3 tbsp dark maple syrup
50g good-quality chocolate (70% cocoa), chopped
1 egg, beaten
zest ½ orange
50g soft dried figs, chopped to a paste in a food processor
½ tsp cinnamon
TO SERVE
150ml whipping cream
1 tbsp icing sugar, plus extra to dust
1 tbsp Cointreau or other Christmassy booze
zest ½ orange

1 Heat oven to 200C/180C fan. Toast the nuts on a small baking tray for 5-8 mins until golden. Roll out the pastry on a lightly floured work surface and stamp 12 circles with a 7.5cm plain round cutter. Use to line the wells of a 12-hole bun tin. Chill until step 3. (You will only use around half of the pastry.)
2 Turn the oven down to 180C/160C fan. Melt the butter, sugar, syrup and chocolate together in a small pan, then beat in the egg, orange zest, figs and cinnamon. Stir in the toasted nuts.
3 Spoon the nutty mixture into the pastry cases and bake for 18-20 mins until the pastry is pale golden. Cool for 10 mins in the tin, then remove to a rack until just warm. Whip the cream with the sugar and booze, then dust the pies with a little icing sugar and finish with a dollop of cream and a scattering of orange zest just before eating. Good with strong coffee or mint tea.

PER SERVING 294 kcals • protein 6g • carbs 28g • fat 18g • sat fat 7g • fibre 2g • sugar 16g • salt 0.2g GF

Turns a traditional Italian dessert into a pretty hand-held pie


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IMMER BESSER

It's beginning to look a lot like....

Jane Hornby shares deliciously festive ideas for you to try over the holidays.

Photographs Will Heap



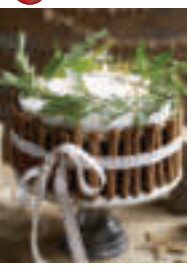
Midwinter candle cake, recipe p68



Mandarin-in-the-middle Christmas pud, recipe p70



Almond-topped mince pies, recipe p70



Buttered rum Christmas cake

SERVES 15-20 **PREP** 30 mins plus overnight soaking **COOK** 3 hrs 15 mins EASY 1 OF 5 A DAY

225g unsalted butter, softened, plus extra for greasing
225g light muscovado sugar 4 large eggs, beaten
225g plain flour
2 tsp ground mixed spice
zest 1 small orange
85g pecan nuts or walnuts, toasted, then roughly chopped
FOR THE FRUIT
150ml cloudy apple juice 50g unsalted butter
2 tbsp maple syrup
5 tbsp dark rum
800g mixed dried fruit (the kind that includes mixed peel)
175g dried cranberries
TO FEED THE CAKE (each time) 2 tbsp dark rum
1 tbsp maple syrup

1 Start with the fruit. Pour the apple juice into a saucepan and bring to a simmer. Add the butter, let it melt, then take off the heat and add the syrup and rum. Put the mixed fruit and cranberries into a large bowl, pour over the hot rum mix, then cover tightly with cling film and leave overnight.
2 The next day, heat oven to 160C/140C fan. Grease and double-line a 20cm round, deep cake tin with non-stick baking parchment. Beat the butter and sugar together until creamy and pale, then gradually beat in the eggs until light and fluffy. If the mix starts to split or look lumpy, add 1 tbsp of the flour and keep beating. Sift in the flour, spices and 1/4 tsp salt, and fold in using a large spoon. Fold in the orange zest, nuts, soaked fruit and soaking liquid.
3 Spoon the batter into the tin, level the top, then make a slight dimple in the middle using the back of the spoon. Bake for 1 hr 30 mins, then reduce oven to 140C/120C fan and bake for a further 1 hr 45 mins or until it has risen, is a dark golden colour and a skewer inserted into the middle of the cake comes out clean. Put the tin on a cooling rack and leave until warm.
4 To feed the cake the first time, use a cocktail stick to poke all over the top of the warm cake. Stir together the rum and maple syrup, then slowly spoon over the cake. Cool completely, then remove the baking parchment, wrap loosely in clean baking parchment and store in an airtight tin. Feed the cake every week to 10 days until you decorate it.

PER SLICE (20) 421 kcals • fat 16g • saturates 8g • carbs 59g • sugars 50g • fibre 2g • protein 4g • salt 0.2g

TO COVER THE TOP OF A CAKE ONLY (AS WITH THE MIDWINTER CANDLE CAKE)

USE 500G
marzipan and 500g sugarpaste, and roll both into a 20cm circle. Brush jam on the top of the cake. Once the cake is topped, use a straight-sided glass or jar to rub around the marzipan and icing to make them flush with the cake. If they're not quite big enough, rub the top of the icing with the flat of your hands to make it spread a little, then use the glass or jar to smooth it.

Midwinter candle cake

Covering just the top of the cake with marzipan and icing is easier for first-time cake decorators, yet still looks impressive.

SERVES 15-20 **TAKES** 30 mins 20cm/8in Christmas cake, top only covered with marzipan and sugarpaste (see Icing your cake)

FOR THE DECORATION
3 unscented tea lights, in metal cases 35-40 cinnamon sticks, 8cm long
ribbon, about 120cm long bay leaf sprigs
rosemary sprigs

1 Arrange the tea lights in a triangle on the top of the cake. Mark their positions by pressing down lightly into the icing, then cut out and remove three circles from the icing, going right down to the marzipan. Insert the candles.
2 Loosely tie the ribbon around the middle of the cake, then drop a cinnamon stick at 12, 3, 6 and 9 o'clock between the ribbon and the cake.
One by one, fill in the gaps with the remaining cinnamon sticks. When they are all upright, tighten and tie the ribbon in a knot you may find a second pair of hands helpful for this bit.
3 Separate the bay into 3-leaf sprigs, then insert into the icing (I find the leaves look best if they all swirl around in the same direction). Add the rosemary, bending the stems a little to help if you need to, then fill in any gaps with single bay leaves. (Make sure that no leaves hang over or near where the candle flames will be). When ready to show off your cake, light the candles. Don't leave the cake unattended.

PER SERVING (20) 518 kcals • fat 17g • saturates 8g • carbs 79g • sugars 69g • fibre 2g • protein 5g • salt 0.2g >>







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STRAWBERRY PANCAKES



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Mandarin-in-the-middle Christmas pud

This isn't as tricky to make as you might think. The mandarin is lightly candied, which creates a tender, syrupy fruit centre that oozes orangey juices as you cut the pudding. If you just want a plain Christmas pudding, simply leave out the mandarin.

SERVES 8-10 **PREP** 30 mins plus at least a few hours soaking **COOK** 8 hrs 15 mins (or longer in a slow cooker) plus reheating

EASY 1 OF 5 A DAY

cream or brandy butter, to serve
FOR THE FRUIT
140g each raisins, sultanas and currants
140g glacé cherries, halved 50g blanched almonds, chopped
1 medium Bramley apple, peeled, cored and grated to give 175g flesh 50ml orange liqueur (I used Cointreau)
150ml medium or sweet Sherry zest and juice 1 orange
FOR THE PUDDING
140g cold butter, plus extra, softened, for greasing
175g dark muscovado sugar, plus 2 tbsp for coating the bowl 175g fresh white breadcrumbs 140g self-raising flour
1 heaped tsp ground mixed spice
2 large eggs, beaten
FOR THE MANDARIN MIDDLE
1 firm mandarin or large seedless clementine, weighing about 140g white granulated sugar
(it must be white for colour) 2 tbsp orange liqueur

1 First, prepare the fruit. In a large mixing bowl, combine the dried fruit, cherries, almonds and apple with the alcohol and the orange juice and zest. Cover with cling film and leave for at least a few hrs, or overnight if you can.
2 Next, prepare the mandarin. Put it in a pan, cover with cold water, then cover the surface with a scrunched-up piece of baking parchment. Bring to the boil and cook for 30 mins or until completely tender when poked with a cocktail stick. Remove the mandarin from the water, keeping 300ml of the cooking liquid in the pan. Set aside the mandarin.
3 Add the sugar to the cooking liquid in the pan and heat gently to dissolve.
Poke several holes in the mandarin, then add to the syrup along with the liqueur. Cover with the parchment again and simmer for 45 mins, turning the mandarin halfway through. By the end of cooking it will be a little translucent and have a dark orange colour. Leave to cool in the syrup (overnight is fine).
4 To make the pudding, grease a 1.5-litre pudding basin, then scatter over the 2 tbsp sugar. In a large bowl, combine the dry ingredients and a pinch of salt. Coarsely grate the butter, and fold into the fruit with the dry ingredients, followed by the eggs.
5 Fill the basin one-third full with the fruit mix, then nestle the mandarin into it. Pack the rest of the mix around and on top of the mandarin and smooth over. You may have some mix left over, depending on the size of the basin. (If you're not using the mandarin, just press it all in as you'll have more room).
6 Tear off a sheet of foil and a sheet of baking parchment, both about 30cm long. Butter the baking parchment and use to cover the foil. Fold a 3cm pleat in the middle of the sheets, then put over the pudding, buttered baking parchment-side down. Tie with string under the lip of the basin, making a handle as you go. Trim the parchment and foil to about 5cm, then tuck the foil around the parchment to seal.
7 To cook the pudding, sit it on a heatproof saucer in a very large saucepan, and pour in just-boiled water to come halfway up the side of the basin. Cover and steam for 6 hrs, topping up the water occasionally. Alternatively, place in a slow cooker, pour hot water halfway up the side of the basin and cook on High for 81/2 hrs. Leave the pudding to cool, and leave in a cool, dark place to mature. To reheat, steam in a pan for 1 hr or remove the foil and parchment, cover with cling film and microwave on Medium for 10 mins. Cut the pudding with a sharp serrated knife, so that the mandarin stays in place and everyonegetsapiece. Servewith cream or brandy butter.

PER SERVING (10) 711 kcals • fat 16g • saturates 8g • carbs 142g • ugars 101g • fibre 3g • protein 8g • salt 0.8g

TIP **Save the cooking syrup – keep it in the fridge – and use as a sweet base for mulled wine or festive cocktails.**



Almond-topped mince pies

Topping mince pies with frangipane livens up every bite with its almond flavour and cakey lightness.

MAKES 24 **PREP** 30 mins **COOK** 20-25 mins

EASY

100g soft pitted prunes, finely chopped (optional)
1 tbsp Armagnac or brandy (optional) 450g Quick-to-mix mincemeat
1 x quantity Rich sweet shortcrust pastry (see recipe, below left), or use a 500g pack ready-made pastry plain flour, for dusting
FOR THE TOPPING
140g soft unsalted butter 140g golden caster sugar 85g self-raising flour 100g ground almonds
2 large eggs, beaten
1/2 tsp almond extract handful flaked almonds icing sugar, to dust

1 Heat oven to 190C/170C fan. Mix the prunes and Armagnac into the mincemeat and set aside. Roll out the pastry on a lightly floured work surface until 3mm thick, cut into circles witha 7.5cm or 8cm round plain cutter and gently press into 2 x 12-hole shallow, non-stick bun tins.
2 For the topping, beat together the butter and sugar with a wooden spoon, then add the flour, ground almonds, eggs, almond extract and a pinch of salt, and beat until smooth.
3 Spoon the mincemeat into the tin (about 1 dessertspoon into each). Spoon over the topping, then smooth it to the edges of the pastry with a palette knife. Scatter over the flaked almonds. *Can now be frozen for up to 1 month.*
4 Bake for 25 mins from room temperature (or 30 mins from frozen) until the pies are golden, risen and the pastry feels firm at the sides. Leave to cool in the tin for 10 mins before transferring to a cooling rack. Dust with icing sugar to serve. *Can be stored in an airtight tin for up to 3 days once cold.*

PER MINCE PIE 284 kcals • fat 14g • saturates 7g • carbs 33g • sugars 22g • fibre 1g • protein 4g • salt 0.1g

New Year's Eve dazzler

Cassie Best's sticky ginger cake, covered in a layer of toasted marshmallow meringue, is guaranteed to add extra sparkle to your New Year's Eve party.

Photographs DAVID MUNNS



Toasted marshmallow & ginger cake, recipe p72

Food styling CASSIE BEST
Styling VICTORIA ALLEN



Toasted marshmallow & ginger cake

SERVES 8-10 **PREP** 55 mins plus cooling
COOK 1 hr 15 mins MORE OF A CHALLENGE ❄ un-iced

100g butter, plus a little extra for greasing
100g dark muscovado sugar
100g black treacle
140g golden syrup
225g plain flour
1 tsp bicarbonate of soda
2 tsp ground ginger
1 tsp ground cinnamon
125ml whole milk
3 medium egg yolks, whisked with a fork (save the whites for the icing)
FOR THE GINGER BUTTERCREAM
140g butter, softened
200g icing sugar
4 balls stem ginger, finely chopped, plus 1 tbsp ginger syrup
½ tsp ground ginger
FOR THE TOASTED MARSHMALLOW ICING
3 medium egg whites
175g golden caster sugar
YOU WILL ALSO NEED
piping bag
large round piping nozzle
cook's blowtorch
3 sparklers to decorate (optional)

1 Melt the butter, sugar, treacle and syrup in a small saucepan, whisking until smooth. Set aside to cool for 10 mins. Heat oven to 160C/140C fan. Grease and line a 2lb loaf tin with baking parchment (our tin was 22 x 7 x 7cm).

2 In a bowl, mix the flour, bicarbonate of soda, ground ginger, cinnamon and ½ tsp salt. Pour in the warm syrup mixture and the milk, followed by the egg yolks. Whisk until you have a smooth batter. Pour into the tin and bake for 1 hr or until a skewer comes out clean. Cool in the tin for 30 mins, then slice off the top to give you a smooth surface. Flip onto a wire rack and remove the baking parchment. Leave to cool. Can now be covered with cling film and kept for up to 5 days.

3 To make the buttercream, put the ingredients in a large bowl and mash together with a fork or spatula (this prevents the icing sugar from going everywhere). When roughly combined, blend with an electric hand whisk until smooth.

4 Now make the marshmallow icing. Put the egg whites, sugar, 1 tbsp water and a good pinch of salt into a heatproof bowl. Place over a pan of simmering water, making sure the bowl doesn't touch the hot water, and whisk until thick and leaving a prominent trail from the beaters – this will take about 4 mins (see picture 1, above right). Remove the bowl from the heat and continue whisking for another 3 mins until cooled slightly and really stiff. Transfer half to a piping bag fitted with a large round nozzle and set aside.

5 When ready to assemble, slice the cake lengthways into 3 even layers. On a cake stand or plate, reassemble the cake, with the largest slice on the bottom, layering with the buttercream.

6 Using a small offset palette knife or small butter knife, cover the cake with the marshmallow icing left in the bowl. Use the palette knife to create vertical lines along the edges (see picture 2 and tip, above right). Now use the piping bag to pipe spikes of meringue over the top of the cake. Use a cook's blowtorch to toast the meringue to a golden brown (picture 3, right) – a few charred patches will add to the effect. Serve straight away or chill for up to 2 days, removing from the fridge 30 mins before serving. We decorated ours with sparklers.

PER SERVING (10) 549 kcals • protein 5g • carbs 82g • fat 22g • sat fat 13g • fibre 1g • sugar 67g • salt 1.2g

TIP **Keep a jug of boiling water to hand to heat the palette knife or butter knife and clean off any crumbs. The hot knife will help to give the icing a smooth finish. Dip into the water, then dry off every three-four swipes.**

MERINGUE KNOW-HOW

This recipe uses Italian meringue, which is made by heating the egg whites and sugar as you mix it. This stabilises the meringue, meaning that it can be kept in the fridge for a couple of days and is safe to eat without baking it first. Italian meringue is often used for making piped meringue baskets, as it holds its shape well when baked.

SAFETY FIRST

Never leave a naked flame or fireworks unattended.



1 Whisk the meringue to ribbon stage before taking it off the heat – this is when the trail from the whisk stays visible for at least 3 seconds.



2 Once you have covered the cake with a smooth layer of meringue icing, use a small offset palette knife or small butter knife to swipe upwards, working your way around the cake, to give a dramatic finish.



3 Hold the blowtorch 2-3cm away from the meringue icing, moving it slowly until the icing is toasted golden brown.



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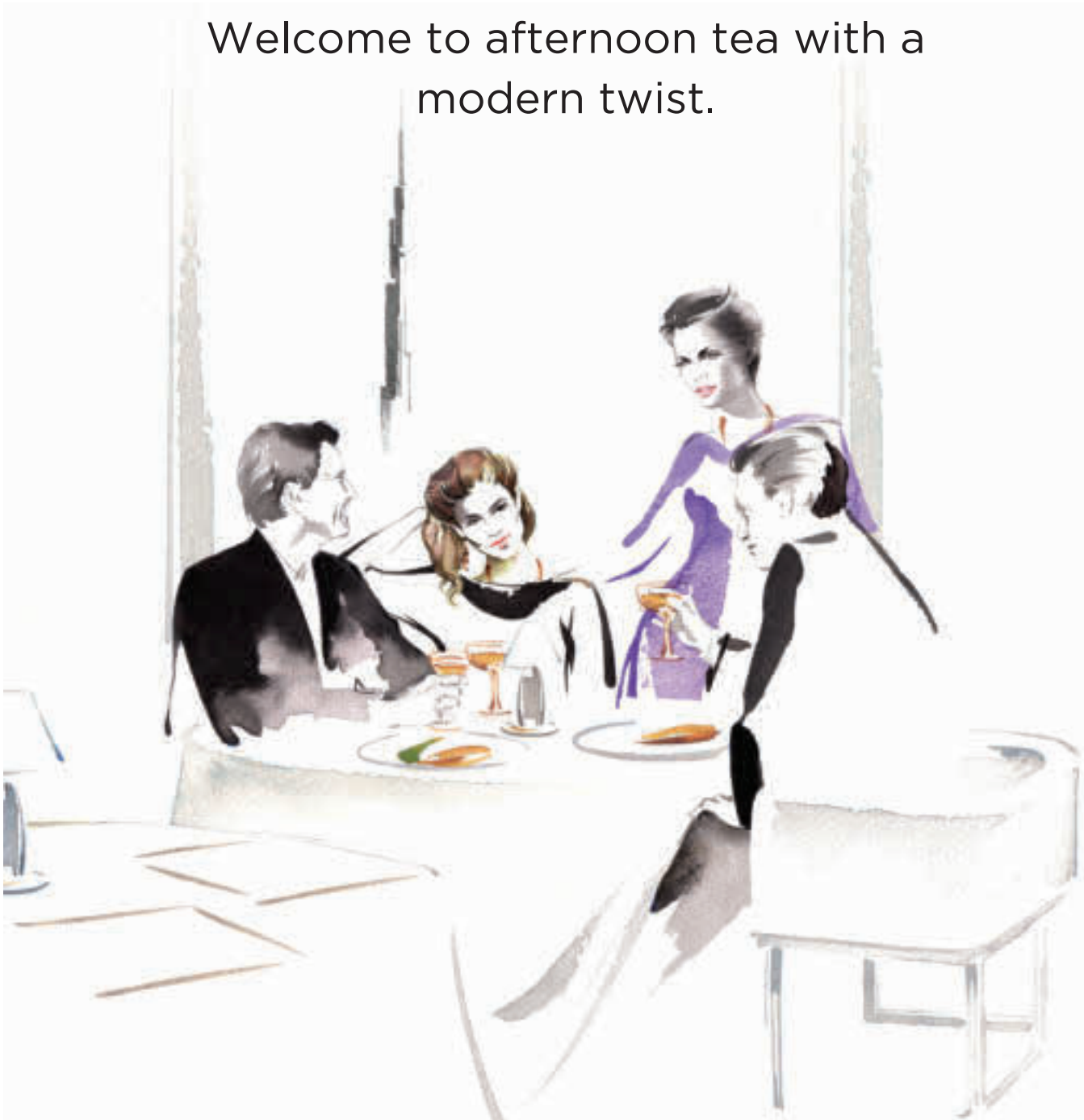
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LURPAK® STEAK WITH A MIXED PEPPERCORN AND THYME SAUCE

PREP 15 mins | COOK 12 mins | SERVES 2

What you need:

- 2 tbsp. Lurpak® Clarified Butter
- 2 large T-bone, sirloin or rump steaks, approx. 2cm thick
- 2 shallots, finely chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, peeled and finely chopped
- 2 tbsp. mixed peppercorns, lightly crushed
- 6 sprigs fresh thyme, leaves picked
- 50ml apple juice
- 200ml beef stock
- 150ml crème fraîche

What you do:

Heat a frying pan and add 1 tbsp. of Lurpak® Clarified Butter. Once melted, add the shallots and cook for 5 minutes until soft. Add the garlic, peppercorns and thyme and cook for a further 2 minutes. remove and set aside to rest for 3 minutes.

Meanwhile remove the steaks from the fridge 10 minutes before cooking and season with black pepper.

Melt 1 tbsp. of Lurpak® Clarified Butter in a large griddle or frying pan and when very hot, fry the steak:

- 1½ minutes each side for rare
- 2 minutes each side for medium rare
- 3 - 4 minutes each side for well done

When the steak is cooked to your liking, remove and set aside to rest for 3 minutes.

Add the apple juice to the sauce and cook until almost evaporated. Then add the stock and continue to cook until reduced by half. Stir in the crème fraîche and simmer for 1 minute.

Serve immediately with the sauce.



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Seasons greetings
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A perfectly planned *Christmas*

Creating a festive feast for a crowd can be a stressful time for home cooks over the holidays. To ease the pressure this year, Scott Stokes, head chef of Rivington Grill, Souk al Bahar, has put together a helpful checklist just for you!

'Order your turkey from the butcher well in advance. Ideally you want a nice, naturally fresh, free-range turkey as opposed to a frozen product.'

'Your main Christmas lunch will take up the majority of the stove space so I would suggest a cold plated starter or sharing platters to begin with.'

DECEMBER 21

Write down your shopping list while looking at your menu. This is called an MEP (Mise en Place) list and as you start to prepare your meal this will help you to make sure you have all components.

DECEMBER 22

Pick up your prize turkey and shop for all the other items on your list. Once you get home, go through your purchases and check against your MEP list.

DECEMBER 23

1 Prepare the turkey. Remove from the packaging, the innards, the wishbone and trim off any feather stems that may be present. Rub under the skin and over the breast meat with softened butter, then stuff the cavity of the turkey with half an orange, half a garlic bulb, a bunch of thyme, some rosemary and sage. Place back in the fridge.
2 Make the stuffing as per recipe. Roll into shape in baking paper then cover with tin foil and place in the fridge.
3 Make the cranberry sauce following your chosen recipe. Once chilled, store in an airtight container. It tastes better if made in advance.

DECEMBER 22

This is when all chopping and slicing should be done. Go from the top to bottom of your menu and prepare everything needed.

DECEMBER 25

6:00am: Wake up the kids (if they're not awake already). Remove the turkey from the fridge and make a cup of coffee for your partner. Enjoy family time opening gifts.
7:00am: Time for breakfast - something simple and light, not too heavy as you have a busy morning ahead. Cereal, toast and some juice will suffice with festive music.
8:30am: Pre-heat the oven to around 200 degrees. Oven temperatures will vary at homes compared to those in a commercial kitchen.
9:00am: Start to cook the turkey, place it on a roasting tray breast-side down to begin. After 1 hour turn the turkey over and baste it with all the fat and juices that ooze out. Make sure you do this every 20 mins until the turkey is cooked.
10:00am: Remove all other ingredients for the main course from the fridge. This will then leave some room for your pre-plated starters to go into the fridge once ready.
10:30am: Turn the turkey over at this point and baste as described earlier.
11:00am: Take this 30-minute window of opportunity to set the table with your family.
11:30am: Pre-plate the starter onto your chosen plate, glass or platter. Place back into the fridge ready for later.
12:00pm: Check the turkey again as it should be nearly cooked. The turkey skin should be light golden colour, with the centre temperature 75C and the juices running clear. Insert a small knife into the leg joint at the thickest part. If the juices run clear the turkey is cooked, if not clear leave in the oven for another 20-30 mins. When the turkey is done, allow to stand for 30 mins before carving.
12:00pm: The roast potatoes can now be put into the oven, remember seasoning is very important before putting into the oven. Your guests have started to arrive now.
12:30pm: Toss the potatoes around and turn them over so you get a nice golden colour. Move them to one side of the roasting tray so you can add the carrots to the tray. The turkey should now be cooked, so remove from the oven and place to one side to rest, covered with a cloth. In a separate roasting tray place a little water and the stuffing that is wrapped in foil. This can go in the oven and cook for the next hour.
1:00pm: Remove the potatoes and carrots, toss around again and add parsnips to the tray. Drizzle the parsnips and carrots with some honey. Put back into the oven and cook for 30 mins. Reduce the oven temperature to keep items warm until serving.
1:15pm: Drop the Brussel sprouts into the boiling water and cook.
1:30pm: Tip any juices from the turkey in the roasting tray into the gravy to enhance the flavour. Cover and keep warm.
1:45pm: Remove the pre-plated starters from the fridge and place into the middle of the table.
1:55pm: Seat all your guests and family.
1:58pm: Just before you sit down place the turkey back into the oven.
2:20pm: Excuse yourself from the table as you need prepare the main course.
2:25pm: The main course is ready so you just need to put it onto big platters for the table. The turkey will be carved at the table in front of everyone and the vegetables on platters for all to share. The gravy is hot and cranberry sauce is at room temperature.
3:30pm: Time to clear the table and get ready for dessert.
4:00pm: Christmas pudding time! Lower the lights in the dining room ready for the pudding.
4:25pm: Clear the table from the pudding and serve the cheese and port.
8.30pm: Bid goodbye to guests, put the kids to bed then plop down, glass in hand, on the sofa with your partner.

Text by SOPHIE MCCARRICK | Images SUPPLIED

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Culinary Heroes

See this year's fantastic lineup of celebrity chefs perform in the **Supertheatre**; in addition to James Martin, Paul Hollywood, Andy Bates, Atul Kochhar and Silvena Rowe, Ed Baines has just joined, making a total of six unmissable personalities to look out for!

You can also catch them at the **Interview Stage** with Lotte Duncan and at **Book Signing** sessions throughout the three day Show.



'Tis the season to be inspired

Each celebrity chef will be demonstrating seasonal dishes and sharing top tips in time for the festive season. Be inspired and recreate these recipes at home - UAE Pie & Mash by Andy Bates, Cardamom-scented Sago Pudding with Fresh Mango by Atul Kochhar, Millefeuille of Pistachio and Basil Cream with Raspberries by James Martin, Pancetta & Cheese Fougasse by Paul Hollywood and Omnia Bliss Beauty Truffles by Silvena Rowe.

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Deliciously prepared and uniquely displayed, the Tea Salon offers guests a unique and leisurely break from the hustle and bustle of the Show.



Even more expertise

It's not just the chefs who are the experts; no one is more passionate and knowledgeable about the top quality food and drink on offer at the Show than those who make it! Simply chatting to the people behind the produce can inspire you to think about the products you buy in a completely different way.



WIN fabulous prizes!

Exciting products will be given away throughout the three-day show courtesy of our partners including Lakeland kitchen products, Costa Café VIP cards and a Teka fridge.

The winner of our Cake Design Competition sponsored by Lurpak will be announced on 19 December by culinary star Andy Bates.



Get the star treatment

Why not treat yourself or someone special to an early Christmas present? Our VIP package includes VIP seating in the Supertheatre, bringing you closer to the action, a valet parking service and a glass of bubbly in the VIP Lounge so you can take a break from a fruitful day of tastings, shopping and celebrity chef sightings.

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Festive cheeseboard

Impress visitors with your delicious cheeseboard selection and knowledge this year Recipe HANNAH YEADON Cheese and drinks SARAH JANE evans



A CHANGE FROM CHEDDAR

Manchego is a sensational Spanish cheese from the south of Madrid. Traditionally made with unpasteurised ewe's milk, the artisan cheeses have a ridged rind made from esparto grass. Industrial versions are shaped with plastic moulds. Manchego ranges from ivory to a pale yellow colour and, depending on the age, from 'curado' (young and creamy) to 'viejo' - mature with a fine blend of richness and lemon highlights. Lovely with quince paste, often available at the cheese counter.

Alternatively, track down the Italian Testun Al Barolo, a seasonal hard cheese made from Alpine milk, matured in barrels enriched with the pressed grapes from Barolo.

BEAUTIFUL BRIE

Brie's mildness and spreadability (once it's been out of the fridge for a bit), plus its affinity with everything from apples to chutney, makes it a regular crowd-pleaser. Unfortunately that mildness can too often mean unripe tastelessness.

For a taste revelation, order an unpasteurised Brie de Meaux or Brie de Melun (Melun is slightly thicker and more flavourful than Meaux). Discover the hint of mushroom, the creamy texture and the refreshing tang.

For something smaller, track down a Fourgerus, a charming little Brie decorated with a fern.

FRESH FLAVOUR

Every cheeseboard needs the lift of a young **goat's cheese**. The fresh, almost lemony bite cuts through the richness of the season. Choose from a range of English and Welsh cheeses.

If you have any goat's cheese left over the next day, don't let it go to waste! Either crumble it over a salad or grill on toasted baguette slices - it's delicious.

RIPE AND CREAMY

Vacherin Mont d'Or, as befits its golden name, does not share space on the cheeseboard - it has to be served alone. There is nothing more tempting than a ripe Vacherin in its bark box, which adds to the cheese's flavour.

A properly ripe Vacherin will have a slight pink bloom on its billowing bumpy top and a suggestion of rippling underneath. This is definitely a cheese worth ordering from a specialist, who will be able to ensure it is ripe for the day you need it. Simply open the top and scoop out the filling.

Photographs PETE CASSIDY | food styling VAL BARRETT | styling JENNY IGGLEDEN



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A magical homemade Christmas

Simple craft ideas to make the season even merrier

Recipes and crafts CASSIE BEST Photographs WILL HEAP

Classic iced holly cake, recipe 66



Decorate them with the kids

Gingerbread bunting

MAKES ABOUT 16 biscuits **PREP** 1 hr 30 mins
COOK 15 mins **A LITTLE EFFORT** ❄ biscuit dough only

FOR THE GINGERBREAD
175g dark muscovado sugar, plus a little extra for the reindeer
85g golden syrup
100g butter
350g plain flour, plus extra for dusting
1 tsp bicarbonate of soda
1 tbsp ground ginger
1 tsp ground cinnamon
1 egg, lightly beaten
TO DECORATE
600g fondant icing sugar
brown and black food colouring
sweets and sprinkles (we used orange jelly beans, white chocolate drops, edible red balls and edible silver balls)
edible white or silver glitter
YOU'LL ALSO NEED
gingerbread man cutter
gingerbread lady cutter
a straw
disposable piping bags
small piping nozzle
cocktail sticks
ribbon or string, to tie together

1 Put the sugar, syrup, butter and a pinch of salt into a saucepan. Bubble for 1-2 mins, mixing to combine. Set aside to cool a little. Put the flour, bicarbonate of soda and spices in a bowl, add the warm syrup mixture and the egg, and stir to combine (it will feel a little soft now, but will firm up once chilled). Cover the bowl with cling film and chill for 30 mins. Heat oven to 200C/180C fan and line 2 baking trays with parchment.
2 Dust your work surface with a little flour, then roll out the dough to the thickness of a £1 coin. Cut out as many men and ladies as you can – you should be able to get about 16 by re-rolling the dough. Place on the trays, then bake for 10-12 mins until slightly risen and golden brown. While they are still warm, push a straw through the top of the gingerbread ladies, and just above where the legs meet on the gingerbread men, to make a hole for stringing up. Cool on a wire rack.

PER BISCUIT 342 kcals • protein 3g • carbs 68g • fat 6g • sat fat 4g • fibre 1g • sugar 50g • salt 0.4g

TO DECORATE YOUR SNOWMEN

1 Divide the icing sugar evenly between 2 bowls. Add enough water, a dribble at a time, until you have a very thick but pipeable icing. Add a few drops of brown food colouring to one bowl of icing brown for the reindeer and mix until evenly coloured. Spoon 2 tbsp of the brown icing into another bowl, then colour black using the black food colouring.
2 Transfer roughly half the white icing to a piping bag fitted with a fine nozzle. Pipe the outline of a snowman onto the gingerbread lady biscuits, piping a little circle around the hole at the top too. Leave to set for 5 mins. Squeeze any leftover icing back into the bowl with the remaining white icing and add a little more water, a splash at a time, until runny but still fairly thick. Transfer back to the piping bag. When the snowman outlines are dry to the touch, pipe enough icing onto the biscuits to flood the surface. Tease the icing into all corners using a cocktail stick.
3 Use half an orange jelly bean for the snowman's nose and silver balls for the buttons. Transfer the brown and black icings to piping bags fitted with small nozzles (or snip off the corner of a sandwich bag), and pipe on brown twigs for arms and black dots as coal for eyes and a mouth. Finally, sprinkle the base of each snowman with a little edible glitter. Leave to dry for at least 2 hrs.

TO DECORATE YOUR REINDEER

1 Just as you did with the snowmen, draw a reindeer outline on each gingerbread man biscuit using the brown icing – turn them upside down first so you can use the legs as the reindeer's antlers. Leave to dry while you loosen the brown icing, as before.
2 Fill each reindeer with the runnier brown icing, being careful not to make the antlers too thick. Tease into the spaces using a cocktail stick. Sprinkle each antler with brown sugar and flick off any excess with the cocktail stick. Stick a red ball or Smartie on each biscuit for a nose, and 2 white chocolate chips for eyes. Use a little black icing to draw a pupil on each eye. Leave to dry for at least 2 hrs.
3 When the biscuits are completely dry, thread and tie through a piece of string and hang. Eat the biscuits within 2 weeks.

Cupcake Christmas tree

MAKES 48 mini cakes and 1 tree **PREP** 1 hr 40 mins
COOK 24 mins A LITTLE EFFORT ❄ un-iced cakes only

FOR THE CUPCAKES
200g butter, softened
200g golden caster sugar
1 tsp vanilla extract
2 eggs
200g self-raising flour
2 tbsp milk
FOR THE ICING
300g butter
525g icing sugar
3 tsp vanilla extract
green food colouring
sweets, to decorate (we used Haribo Droppys and Waitrose jelly diamonds)
large white chocolate star, to decorate
edible gold spray
YOU WILL NEED
24-hole mini muffin tin
48 green mini-muffin or petit four cases
small plant pot or mini bucket (roughly 13cm across the top)
12cm foam cone (measured across base)
cocktail sticks
green paint

1 Heat oven to 180C/160C fan and line the muffin tin with the muffin cases. Put half the butter, sugar and vanilla in a bowl, and beat until pale and fluffy. Add one egg and mix well. Add half the flour and milk, and mix with a spatula until combined. Use 2 teaspoons to distribute the cake mixture evenly among the cases and bake for 12 mins until risen and golden, and a skewer inserted to the centre comes out clean. Transfer to a wire rack to cool. Repeat to make another batch of 24 mini cakes.
2 While the cakes are cooling, make the icing. Put the butter and icing sugar in a bowl and beat until smooth. Add the vanilla and food colouring, and blend again until evenly coloured. Transfer the icing to a piping bag fitted with a small star nozzle. Once the cakes have cooled, use a skewer to make a small hole in the base of each cake. To decorate the cakes, pipe blobs of green icing over the surface of each one.
3 Now you're ready to start assembling your Christmas tree. Paint the foam cone all over with green paint and leave to dry – don't worry about it being too neat. Push the cone into the pot. To build the tree, push a cocktail stick into the base of each cake and press it into the cone. Continue until the cone is covered in cakes, trying to keep them as close together as possible. You may have some left over, which you can serve alongside the tree.
4 Spray the chocolate star gold and put on top of the tree, then decorate the rest of the tree with sweets. The cakes will last for 3 days.

PER CUPCAKE 157 kcals • protein 1g • carbs 18g • fat 9g • sat fat 5g • fibre none • sugar 15g salt 0.2g »





Classic iced holly cake

CUTS INTO 16-20 slices **PREP** 1 hr **NO COOK**
A LITTLE EFFORT | 1 OF 5 A DAY

1 x 20cm round or square suits-all Christmas cake
5 tbsp apricot jam, warmed and sieved
500g pack marzipan
a little icing sugar, for dusting
1.25kg ready-to-roll white fondant icing
green and red food colouring
edible red glitter
YOU'LL NEED
small holly-shaped cutter

1 Sit the cake on a cake board or serving plate. Brush the top and sides with some of the jam. Roll out the marzipan on an icing-sugar-dusted surface until large enough to cover the top and sides of the cake – use a piece of string to help you measure. Carefully lift your marzipan on top and smooth down the sides of the cake to stick. Trim the bottom, then brush all over again with more jam.
2 Make sure your surface is really clean, then dust again with a little icing sugar. Knead 850g of the icing until it is very smooth and pliable. As with the marzipan, roll out the icing, then cover the cake and once again trim any excess from the bottom. Smooth out any bumps or marks with the flats of your hands, rubbing the icing to buff it to a shine.
3 Pull off about a fifth of the remaining icing and knead in enough red food colouring to give a bright colour. Pinch off small amounts and roll between your fingers to make little 'berries'. Sprinkle some glitter on a saucer and roll the balls in it to coat completely. Shake off any excess glitter and set aside to firm up.
4 Knead some green food colouring into the remaining icing and roll it out thinly on an icing-sugar-dusted surface. Stamp out lots of holly leaves and begin sticking them onto your iced cake. Use a paintbrush to moisten the underside of each leaf with a little water – don't make them too wet though, or the green colour might leak onto the rest of the cake. When you have added enough holly leaves, mix a splash of water into some icing sugar to make a runny but fairly stiff icing, and use this to stick on your glitter berries. Leave the cake for a good couple of hours to dry before cutting into it. The cake will sit happily uncut for up to 2 weeks. Once cut into, keep in an airtight tin for up to a month.

PER SLICE (20) • 726 kcals • protein 7g • carbs 129g • fat 19g • sat fat 8g • fibre 3g • sugar 119g • salt 0.2g



Snow globe hot chocolate

MAKES 1 **TAKES** 20 mins EASY

3 large white marshmallows
icing pens, in black and orange
1 giant chocolate button
1 chocolate – a mini Reese's peanut butter cup or other domed chocolate is perfect
2 tbsp cocoa powder
2 tbsp Horlicks powder
handful mini white marshmallows
1 cookie (small enough to fit in a jam jar)
3 strawberry laces
YOU WILL NEED
1 cocktail stick
1 large jam jar
ribbon and gift tag

1 First make the marshmallow snowman. Skewer the marshmallows together with a cocktail stick – cut off any of the stick that protrudes from the top. Use a little of the icing pen to stick a chocolate button and peanut butter cup to the top of each marshmallow stack, then draw on a face and 3 dots for buttons. Plait 3 strawberry laces and tie around the neck for a scarf. Stick the snowman to a cookie with a little more icing, then set aside to dry for a few mins.
2 Mix the cocoa and Horlicks together in the bottom of your jar. Put the snowman on top, then scatter around the mini marshmallows. Screw on the lid, tie with a ribbon and a gift tag with the following instructions: Warm 300ml milk in a pan. Remove the snowman from the jar and add the milk. Stir until smooth and chocolatey, then enjoy, with your marshmallow snowman for dunking.

PER SERVING 601 kcals • protein 19g • carbs 88g • fat 18g • sat fat 8g • fibre 3g • sugar 67g • salt 1.1g

Candy cane lollipops

MAKES 6 **PREP** 10 mins **COOK** 5 mins EASY

12 peppermint candy canes
200g white chocolate, chopped
edible sprinkles (we used gold pearls from Dr Oetker)
YOU WILL NEED
6 ovenproof lolly sticks
cellophane bags and ribbons (if giving as a gift)

1 Heat oven to 180C/160C fan and line 2 baking sheets with baking parchment. Arrange the candy canes in pairs on the trays, to make heart shapes. Put a lolly stick between each one, where they meet at the bottom. Put the trays in the oven and cook for 5 mins.
2 The candy canes should now be soft enough for you to carefully pinch together where they join at the top and the bottom, around the stick. Be careful as the canes will be extremely hot, but work quickly or they will set and you won't be able to pinch them together.
3 Melt the chocolate in a pan over a bowl of barely simmering water, or in the microwave. Spoon the melted chocolate into the middle of the heart lollies, pushing it out to fill the spaces. Scatter over your choice of sprinkles, then leave to cool completely. When set, peel off the baking parchment, wrap in cellophane bags and tie with a ribbon to give as a gift.

PER LOLLIPOP 269 kcals • protein 3g • carbs 41g • fat 10g • sat fat 6g • fibre none • sugar 41g • salt 0.1g



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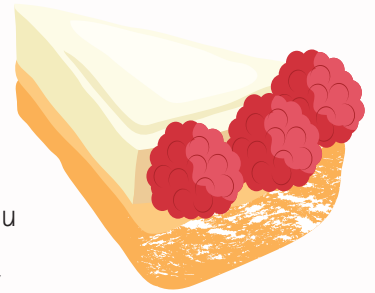
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Cake Clinic



Baking is an art and a science – and the science part can let you down once in a while. Here's how to diagnose common problems and stop them happening again Illustrations LAUREN RADLEY

Doesn't look good

Cake didn't rise
- You didn't use enough raising agent
- The raising agent might be past its sell-by date
- Oven temperature might have been wrong, see 'Get the measurements right' (below right)
- Oven door was opened too early during baking

Cake rose in oven, then collapsed
- Cake was removed from oven too soon and was uncooked in the middle
- You used too much raising agent

Domed or cracked top
- Oven temperature was too high
- Cake tin was too small, see 'Get the measurements right' (far right)

Remember Cupcakes should have a domed top

TIP To stop fruitcakes doming, use a spoon to make a 2-3cm deep indentation, sloping smoothly towards the centre, before baking

Surface covered with holes
- Oven temperature was too low
- Raising agent wasn't mixed in thoroughly
- Cake was not put in oven quickly enough after mixing. Next time, don't let the mixture/batter stand around for too long before cooking

Fruit sunk to the bottom
- Cake mixture too slack – use less liquid
- Fruit was too large – chop or slice smaller
- Fruit was too syrupy – rinse and dry thoroughly

TIP Try dusting the fruit with flour to give it more 'grip' in the mixture

Disappointing texture

Bake is chewy or heavy
- Cake mixture was overmixed after the flour was added
- Not enough raising agent, or too much liquid in the recipe
- Did the mixture curdle while you were preparing it? Next time, add 1 tsp of the measured flour in between the eggs

Dry
- It may have been overbaked, see 'Over- or Underbaked' (below right)
- There wasn't enough liquid in the recipe
- Gluten-free bakes sometimes seem dry because of the lack of 'chew' (which gluten would provide)

Soggy middle
- The cake is undercooked – see 'Over-or Underbaked' (right)
- The cake has been cooked at too high a temperature, so the edges may be brown, but the middle is still wet

TIP Cut a disc of baking parchment and tear a small hole in the middle. Put it on top of the cake when the crust is cooked, to allow the cake to cook through without the crust browning further

Didn't taste right

Tastes 'fizzy'
- The cake is underbaked and the flour is not 'cooked out'
- There is too much raising agent in the mix. You might have measured incorrectly, see 'Get the measurements right' (below)

Tastes dull
- If you are disappointed with your bake's flavour, next time, try adding a pinch of salt or a squeeze of lemon juice to the batter. Or soak the cooked sponge in a flavoured syrup

The golden rules

GET THE MEASUREMENTS RIGHT

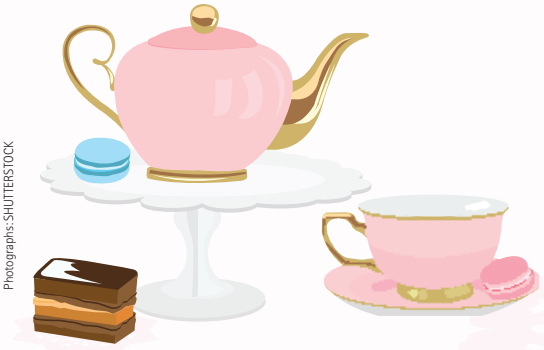
Sloppy measuring is probably the cause of most problem bakes. Remember:

- Always use cooks' measuring spoons
- Teaspoons and tablespoons must always be level
- Measure cake tins across the bottom to ensure that they are the correct size
- Use an oven thermometer for accuracy
- Read the whole recipe before starting
- Place your bake on the middle shelf of the oven, unless instructed otherwise

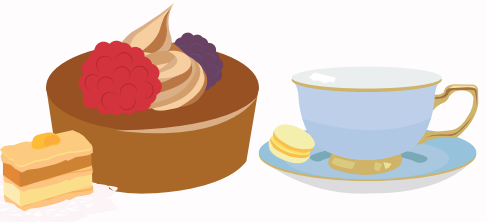
OVER- OR UNDERBAKED?

Knowing when a cake is cooked is an art

- Is it shrinking away from the sides of the tin?
- Lightly touch the top – is it firm? (Sponge cakes should feel springy.) Give the tin a gentle shake – does the cake look set? (Brownies are the exception).
- For many cakes, the final test is with a skewer or cocktail stick – it should come out clean or, in the case of most chocolate cakes, with a few crumbs attached when inserted into the centre of the cake.







Photographs: SHUTTERSTOCK

24 PERFECT



1 Kick off your Christmas countdown with this treat-filled advent calendar. **DHS420, BATEEL.**



2 Sip on toasty beverages from this adorable mug. **DHS15, HOME CENTRE.**

3 A seriously cool gift, this ice bucket is a bargain! **DHS15, HOME CENTRE.**



4 Plate up your mince pies with a delightful dish! **DHS120, EMMA BRIDGEWATER AT HARVEST HOME.**



5 Whether it's a treat for your table or someone else's, we love this candle holder. **DHS29, HOMES R US.**



6 These candies make for the perfect stocking fillers. **DHS35, FORTNUM & MASON.**



7 This quirky cookie cutter kit is great for loved ones who are baking mad. **DHS350, HARVEST HOME.**



8 A special sweet treat for loved ones to eat! **DHS79 (300G), TORRONS VICENS, TIMES SQUARE DUBAI.**





9 Little ones will love these fun napkin rings at festive meals. **DHS69 (3-PIECE SET), HOME CENTRE.**



10 These chic crumple-effect cups are a great talking point at any dinner party. **FROM DHS50, REVOL 'CRUMPLE' COLLECTION AT BLOOMINGDALE'S.**

11 Spoil someone special with this elegant grape cooler. **DHS699, FUSION AT THE ONE.**





12 Go for gold with these glitzy bon bon cups. **DHS9 (SET OF 45), LAKELAND.**

PRESENTS

We've gathered a selection of fabulous gastronomic gift ideas that are perfect for your friends and family!



13 This super-sparkly portable cup is a coffee-lovers dream. **DHS70, BAN.DO.**



14 Your guests will be raving about this reindeer cupcake holder. **DHS42 (SET OF 8), LAKELAND.**



15 Perfect for Christmas cooking, this gingerbread man spatula will put a smile on anyone's face! **DHS29, CRATE & BARREL.**

16 An edible tree? Yes please! **DHS150, COCOSIA ARTISAN CHOCOLATE.**



17 Drinks are far more fun from this snowman milk glass! **DHS9, CRATE & BARREL.**



18 Make festive food prep that little bit more special with these holiday measuring cups. **DHS119 (SET OF 4), CRATE & BARREL.**





19 This festive throne would look regal in any home. **DHS3,750, WARDE BY TREVI DESIGN, SHEIKH ZAYED ROAD.**



20 This artistic plate is a classic that will never go out of style. **DHS190, IITTALA COLLECTION AT JASHANMAL STORES.**



21 Whether it's for storing festive treats or simply for décor, this is a beautiful addition to a dining room. **DHS1,700, ETHAN ALLEN.**



22 Splurge on a beautiful hamper filled with chocolate Ganache or Truffles. **FROM DHS565 (PER KILO), FORREY & GALLAND.**



23 Two gifts in one, these delicious cherry and cranberry biscuits come in a magical, musical tin. **DHS55, FORTNUM & MASON.**

24 Gift someone with one of the hottest gadgets of the year – a Nutribullet! **DHS500, LAKELAND.**







Barbecue Delights

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LOCATIONS

Downtown Dubai | "The Walk" at Jumeirah Beach Residence | Lamcy Square | Dragon Mart 2 - Dubai

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Delicious seafood paella, recipe p78

Made for sharing

If you're entertaining a crowd, keep things relaxed. Lay out tempting dishes and let everyone help themselves. And to keep you relaxed, most of these dishes can be made or frozen ahead

Recipes KATY GREENWOOD Photographs WILL HEAP



Layered hummous with spiced tortilla chips, recipe p78



Mincemeat, apple & cranberry lattice tart, recipe p78



Seafood paella

SERVES 8 **PREP** 40mins **COOK** 1 hr 10 mins
A LITTLE EFFORT | LOW FAT | 1 OF 5 A DAY

20-24 raw shell-on king prawns
2 tbsp olive oil
500g monkfish, cut into chunks
1 large onion, finely chopped
500g paella rice
4 garlic cloves, sliced
2 tsp smoked paprika
1 tsp cayenne pepper (optional)
pinch of saffron
½ x 400g can chopped tomatoes (save the rest for the stock, below)
500g mussels, cleaned
100g frozen peas
100g frozen baby broad beans
handful parsley leaves, roughly chopped
FOR THE STOCK
1 tbsp olive oil
1 onion, roughly chopped
½ x 400g can chopped tomatoes
6 garlic cloves, roughly chopped
1 chicken stock cube
1 star anise

1 Peel and de-vein the prawns, reserving the heads and shells. Return the prawns to the fridge.
2 To make the stock, heat the oil in a large pan over a medium-high heat and add the onion, tomatoes, garlic, and reserved prawn shells and heads. Cook for 3-4 mins, then pour in 2 litres of water and add the stock cube and star anise. Bring to a boil, then simmer for 30 mins. Leave to cool slightly, then whizz in batches in a blender or food processor. Strain through a fine sieve.
3 Heat the oil in a large paella pan or an extra-large frying pan. Brown the monkfish for a few mins each side, then remove and set aside. Add the onion and fry for 4-5 mins until softened.
4 Stir in the rice and cook for 30 secs to toast. Add the garlic, paprika, cayenne (if using) and saffron, cook for another 30 secs, then stir in the tomatoes and 1.5 litres of the fish stock. Bring to the boil, then turn down to a simmer and cook, stirring, for about 10 mins (the rice should still be al dente). Return the monkfish to the pan with the prawns, mussels, peas and broad beans.
5 Cover the pan with a large baking tray, or foil, and cook on a low heat for another 10-15 mins until the mussels are open and the prawns are cooked through. Scatter over the parsley before serving.

PER SERVING 384 kcals • protein 26g • carbs 54g • fat 6g • sat fat 1g • fibre 5g • sugar 5g • salt 1.5g



Layered hummous with spiced tortilla chips

SERVES 8 **PREP** 30 mins **COOK** 10 mins
EASY | V

FOR THE HUMMOUS
480g can chickpeas, drained and rinsed
4 tbsp tahini
3 garlic cloves, crushed
2 tsp ground cumin
5 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
zest and juice 1½ lemons
FOR THE HERBY OIL
4 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
½ bunch parsley, leaves picked
½ bunch mint, leaves picked
juice ½ lemon
1 green chilli, deseeded and diced
FOR THE TORTILLA CHIPS
1 tbsp olive oil
1 tsp ground cumin
1 tsp sumac
4 flour tortillas
TO SERVE
100g pack pomegranate seeds
2 tbsp pine nuts, toasted
200g feta, crumbled

1 In a food processor, whizz together all the ingredients for the hummous, adding about 50ml water to loosen the mixture to your desired consistency. Season, then chill for up to 24 hrs.
2 In the small bowl of a food processor or with a stick blender, whizz together all the ingredients for the herby oil. This can also be chilled for up to 24 hrs.
3 Just before you want to serve, heat oven to 200C/180C fan to make the tortilla chips. Mix together the oil, cumin and sumac, brush over one side of each tortilla and season. Cut each one into 8 triangles and arrange in a single layer on a baking tray (you may need to use 2 trays, or cook them in batches). Bake in the oven for 5-8 mins until crisp and lightly golden.
4 Spread the hummous over a large serving plate, drizzle with the herby oil and scatter over the pomegranate seeds, pine nuts and feta. Serve with the homemade tortilla chips.

PER SERVING 281 kcals • protein 6g • carbs 18g • fat 20g • sat fat 3g • fibre 4g • sugar 1g • salt 0.4g



Mincemeat, apple & cranberry lattice tart

SERVES 8 **PREP** 20 mins
COOK 20-25 mins EASY

flour, for dusting
500g puff pastry
2 Granny Smith apples, peeled, cored and diced
140g fresh (or frozen and defrosted cranberries)
½ tsp cinnamon
½ tsp mixed spice
1 tbsp golden caster sugar, plus extra for sprinkling
zest ½ lemon
411g jar mincemeat
1 egg, beaten
whipped cream, to serve

1 Heat oven to 200C/180C fan and put a baking sheet in to heat up. Lightly flour a work surface, roll out the puff pastry to a 30 x 45cm rectangle, then put on a sheet of baking parchment. Mix together the apples and cranberries, then add the cinnamon, mixed spice, sugar, lemon zest and mincemeat, and mix again.
2 Arrange the pastry in front of you with a short edge nearest to you. Spread the mincemeat mixture in a line down the centre, about 12cm wide, leaving 2cm of pastry at the top and bottom.
3 To create the lattice pattern, start at the top of the pastry and cut a 1.5-2cm-wide horizontal strip of pastry on both sides of the mincemeat filling (so it is still attached next to the filling). About 1.5cm in from the filling, cut out a 0.5cm strip of pastry and remove this, then cut another 1.5-2cm strip (you're creating a pattern like the teeth of a comb). Repeat this method until you get to the bottom of the pastry. You'll need to cut out the final strip and remove this. Fold the top and bottom flaps of pastry up and over the filling. Fold the strips of pastry diagonally over the filling, starting from the top until you reach the bottom, creating a lattice pattern. *You can now chill the tart for up to 2 days, or freeze for up to 2 months.*
4 Brush the tart with the egg and sprinkle with the extra sugar. Using the baking parchment, transfer the tart to the hot baking tray. Bake for 20-25 mins or until golden brown on top (add an extra 10-15 mins if baking from frozen). Leave to cool for 5 mins before serving with whipped cream or brandy cream.

PER SERVING 422 kcals • protein 5g • carbs 59g • fat 18g • sat fat 7g • fibre 2g • sugar 38g • salt 0.5g



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Pantry planner

Tips, tricks and product picks!

Reader tip of the month:

You can clean any barbecue grill with half an onion. Heat the grill up and rub it hard with the onion (cut-side down) at the end of a fork. This will loosen up baked on grime and take it right off.



Fortnum & Mason gets festive

Treat your friends, family and loved ones to a selection of delights from Fortnum & Mason this Christmas, with the brand's annual magical festive collection. On offer are the brand's renowned Christmas Hampers, biscuits, special tea blends, along with Christmas puddings and decorations, plus a super-special Fortnum & Mason advent calendar. Known for the meticulous attention to detail, Fortnum & Mason adds special touches to products making them that extra-bit more special such as musical biscuit tins, baubles containing scrumptious confectionary and festive-themed chocolate pieces. Perfect for filling stockings and making any food-lover's day, the range is in the Dubai Mall store now. *04-3882627*

Get organised



Pavitra Pujary,
founder of interior design firm Pure Coalesce, offers practical home décor advice.

Q. I live in a reasonably-sized studio apartment, but I'm looking to have friends over during the festive period. Could you please tell me how to best maximise the space I do have?

A. In a studio apartment the living and bedroom space is usually combined so it would be best to use multi-functional pieces. Dividing an already small space into smaller segments is not advisable. Instead, use pieces that can provide more than one function, pieces that are foldable, stackable and collapsible are great for small spaces such as sofa-beds, nesting tables (instead of a single side table), coffee tables with pull-out stools for extra seating space, foldable or stackable dining chairs to go with a drop-leaf dining table that could double up as a console when not in use are some tricks to maximise the space.

PRODUCT PICKS



SugarMoo is spoiling you this Christmas with its delicious, limited-edition range of festive desserts. Offerings include the 'Silly sunken santa', 'Frosty fluff', 'Red velvet holiday brownie' and much more. From Dhs25 available at www.sugarmoo.com.

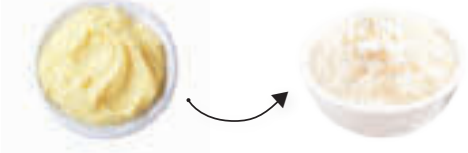


Get your hands on Catalonia's 240-year-old premium nougat brand, Torrons Vicens. The delectable bars come in a huge assortment of flavours and textures – our current favourite nougat is the chocolate with milk and almonds! Dhs65 (500g), Torrons Vicens, Times Square, Dubai.

Indulge in some quality coffee from Coffee Planet, with its Colombia Finca La Meseta Red Honey Processed Castillo and Caturra blend. Made with honey, candied raspberry and tasty blackberry, this medium roast will take your cuppa to the next level. Dhs45, shop.coffeeplanet.com.



SMART SWAPS:



116 calories
1 side of mashed potato

27 calories
1 side of cauliflower mash



69 calories
Pack of 2 granola bars

30 calories
10 almonds



440 calories
Grilled chicken Caesar salad (340g)

247 calories
Greek salad with feta cheese (335g)

Compiled by SURBHA CHANDE | Photographs SUPPLIED; SHUTTERSTOCK

LURPAK® SPICED MOROCCAN CHICKEN WITH LEMON POTATOES

PREP 20 mins | COOK 2hrs | SERVES 4

What you need:

- Lurpak® Cooking Mist
- 1 whole chicken, roughly 2kg
- Juice of one lemon
- 1 chilli, deseeded and finely chopped
- 1 tsp. Ras-el-hanout
- 500g potatoes, washed and cut into wedges
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 star anise
- Finely grated rind of one lemon, or one preserved lemon that has been finely chopped
- 300ml chicken stock
- 6 garlic cloves, unpeeled

What you do:

Pre-heat the oven to 200˚C / 220˚C Fan Assisted / Gas Mark 7.
Spray the chicken generously with Lurpak® Cooking Mist, squeeze over the lemon juice and season with salt and black pepper. Place the chicken in a large roasting tray, breast-side down, and roast for 20 minutes.
Mix the chopped chilli and Ras-el-hanout in a small bowl.
Remove the chicken from the oven, turn it over and coat with the spice mixture. Add the potatoes in the roasting tin, along with the cinnamon stick, bay leaf, star anise and grated lemon rind or chopped preserved lemon.
Pour in the chicken stock and scatter over the garlic cloves.
Reduce the oven to 160˚C / 180˚C Fan Assisted / Gas Mark 3 and roast the chicken for 1 ½ hours, or until the juices run clear.
Remove the chicken from the pan and cover lightly in foil, drain off the leftover juices into a jug and return the potatoes to the oven for 10 minutes.
Serve immediately.



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Gourmet Lifestyle

Travel, global cuisines, health, interviews, kitchens and more









IN THIS SECTION

✳ The internationally famed Chef Heinz Beck welcomes us into his kitchen, **P102** ✳ Hundreds of food-loving visitors enjoyed three days of live cooking at Taste of Abu Dhabi, **P114** ✳ Take a look at the culinary offerings available at Abu Dhabi's Yas Viceroy, **P117** ✳ Last month an exclusive ceremony took place for The Pro Chef Awards 2015, **P120**

Michelin-star MARVEL

One of Europe's most respected chefs, Heinz Beck has three Michelin stars under his belt, nine restaurants globally, over 30 years of experience – and he's not showing signs of slowing any time soon! We caught up with him during a recent visit to his Dubai-based restaurant, Social by Heniz Beck, Waldorf Astoria The Palm Jumeirah.
By Sophie McCarrick



Photographs MAKSYM PORIECHKIN

From Germany, Italy, to London, Tokyo, Dubai, and many more in between, internationally renowned chef Heniz Beck is a busy guy, to say the least. Yet, despite his hectic, travelling schedule, he's not stressed at all – simply eager to share his experiences and passion for food. Originally from Germany, Beck moved to Rome, Italy in 1994 to take the reigns at La Pergola, where he earned three Michelin stars. He has become a well-respected advocate of light and healthy Mediterranean cuisine, and continues to support research into the science behind nutrition and food-related diseases. With years of experience, the chef sits down with us to explain why the dining experience doesn't end with paying the bill.

Taking it back to the beginning, what got you started in the kitchen?

I wanted to become a painter as a child, but my father didn't support that. He believed that painting was just a hobby and not a job. So I turned to cooking, because it was something I believed that would still allow me to express myself – and it does.

So, what would you say your main inspirations are?

Chef Heniz Winkler has always been a huge inspiration to me. But generally speaking, everything inspires me. I look for the uniqueness in everything I see on my travels, which is reflected in my food.

What took you down the route of Mediterranean cuisine?

I've always really been interested in healthy cooking, and once I moved to Italy, it was only natural that my interest towards Mediterranean food strengthened, and has continuously in the 21 years following.

So your interest in 'healthy food' hasn't just been inspired by recent trends?

Certainly not! Since I started cooking, it fascinated me learning about the health values and implications that food has. I now have a nice research centre in the University of Medicine in Rome where we are looking into how food affects the human body. At the end of the day, we are what we eat – people really need to respect that. What we put into our bodies affects everything from weight, blood pressure, mood, energy, how we sleep – everything!

There's a lot more that goes into healthy eating than meets the eye. I have been researching it for years and in recent times it has become more of a trend, which has many chefs claiming to be 'healthy chefs', when in actual fact, they don't know what they're talking about.

Would you say your menus reflect your research findings?

Yes, all of my dishes are in line with my beliefs and research. I'm not saying you'll come into one of my restaurants and find diet food, because that's not the case. I don't believe in diets – they are not sustainable. Eating well is a lifestyle. Guests to my restaurant come in to eat well and enjoy real flavours in a great atmosphere. I prepare food as healthy as I can and in a way that retains as much nutritional value as possible.

At the end of the day, we are what we eat – people really need to respect that. What we put into our bodies affects everything from weight, blood pressure, mood, energy, how we sleep – everything!

My job as a chef is to respect food and respect my customer. My job is to ensure that the customer leaves feeling happy, sleeps well and wakes up feeling energised because of what they've eaten. If my cooking is bad, it makes the body heavy, which makes everyone tired on the dinner table, which in turn kills the atmosphere. Then they will have digestion problems, which leads to sleeping bad, and then the next day they are fatigued and don't have enough energy. The way food is cooked plays a huge part. A dining experience doesn't finish when you pay the bill – it's in the morning when you wake up feeling good.

For our home cooks, what ways could they cook healthier at home?

Firstly I'd advise to stop using convenient products. It may be great because it's pre-made or just needs heating up, but it's really not good for you. Secondly, don't use temperatures that are too high when you're cooking, and cut back on grilling too much because it creates oxidation in product, which is very bad for the body. Additionally, steam vegetables as opposed to boiling them. Buy only what you need, on a daily basis and stop over-buying products that you're not going to use within a few days otherwise it looses its nutritional value, goes off and then becomes waste. No one wants old vegetables. Also, never go food shopping when you are hungry, because you'll end up buying everything that catches your eye and much more than you need.

Do you create your menus around seasonality and availability of produce?

Of course! In Dubai it's slightly more difficult than in my other restaurant destinations because availability of fresh produce isn't as good. But, I am very selective about my products. In Italy for example I have a man who supplies pigeons to me from his small farm. He has just three clients. So you can imagine the scale of the operation. But his product is of an extremely high standard and I've not found anything else that compares, so as and when he has the pigeon available, I'll put it on to the menu.

Looking back on your career, what would you say has been the most monumental moment of your journey?

When I earned three Michelin stars for La Pergola in Rome – I really didn't expect it or see it coming. It was an amazing experience.

Have you ever had to deal with unhappy customers?

Well, you're never going to please everyone, so I have had my fair few encounters over the years. I once had a woman at La Pergola requesting pigeon, which was unavailable at the time due to short supply. Speaking to her she told me that it was unacceptable to come into a 3-Michelin star restaurant to not have what she wanted. My response was that it was unacceptable to serve a customer a product of lower quality because our exclusive supplier didn't have stock at the time. The pigeon that I buy is 100% biological and 100% high quality, so that fact that it is of such quality in a



demanding market, it sometimes happens that we are unable to get it. I can apologise, but unfortunately I won't serve anything but high quality. So if that means running out of stock, then so be it.

Looking at current trends in the market at the moment, what would you say are the hottest menu picks?

Everywhere is different, but generally I always say 'think global and act local'. It's important to stay on trend but also relevant to your market. You have to look at international trends yet adapt to the local scene so that people understand your food.

How do you spend your free time?

What free time (laughs)? I don't really have spare time. With nine restaurants globally, I'm working seven days a week. I used to have various hobbies back in the day, that I now don't have time to do anymore. Who said anything about slowing down when you get older! I can't complain though, because I'm doing what I love and what I'm passionate about.

How much time do you spend in the kitchen?

Usually, every day. The latest I go into the kitchen on a daily basis is 7pm, for around a minimum of six hours. And I'm cooking as well, which is important to me. I'm not just stood on the pass. No matter how much experience I gain, I'll never give up my time in the kitchen. There's nothing better than cooking.

What would be your word of advice to aspiring chefs?

Pick another career path (laughs). No, I'm joking. Being a chef is the only thing I'd want to be and I'd encourage others as well. But only if they have the passion because it's not an easy job. Many people start learning how to be a chef, yet quit quite early on as it becomes challenging very quickly, so passion is an essential. Secondly, I'd also tell them to take quality time to really cook and really eat – understanding and appreciating techniques, flavours and fusions. Understanding quality is the key.

Quick Qs with Chef Heinz

Tell us something about you that we don't already know about you?
I love chocolate!

Dream person to work with for one hour?
Al Pacino

What are your top five global food destinations?
Tokyo, London, Paris, Rome, and New York

What are your top dishes to make at home?
Pasta al forno, minestrone soup, a nice fresh salad of peach and pesto of pistachio, and tiramisu.

More than meets the eye.

Scintillating venues are just half the story at Dubai Marina Yacht Club.



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Tom Kerridge & Sat Bains

A friendship glittering with Michelin stars is sustained by a keen sense of competition and a great deal of fun

Interviews DEBORA ROBERTSON



After a brief stint as a child actor, West Country cook **Tom Kerridge** worked with acclaimed chefs Stephen Bull and Gary Rhodes. In 2005, he and his wife, Beth, opened The Hand & Flowers in Marlow, which in 2012 became the first pub in the world to hold two Michelin stars. Tom has written several cookbooks and appears regularly on TV, including as presenter of BBC Two's *Food and Drink*.

Sat Bains was born in Derby. After a stint at London's L'Escargot, he won the Roux Scholarship in 1999, then worked at a three-Michelin-star restaurant in France. His Restaurant Sat Bains, which he runs with his wife in Nottingham, won its second Michelin star in 2012. He appears often on TV and his first cookbook, *Too Many Chiefs, Only One Indian*, won several awards.



Sat and I met at the Cateys, the hospitality industry awards, about nine years ago. My first impression was that he was very confident, loud, brash and fun. He's an industry giant and a leader of men. He's the sort of person that you'd go to war with. I've never met someone so driven, so determined, and with such discipline.

We both opened our restaurants in 2005, and we won two Michelin stars at the same time. We've grown at a similar pace, but we work in very different ways. My food has to suit my pub environment, whereas Sat isn't scared to push boundaries. He's at the forefront, driving everything forward. He's one of my closest friends, not just in culinary terms – he's one of the first people I'd call if I needed any advice.

Sat's competitive in everything he does. We both go clay pigeon shooting, and he will not be beaten. I find his enthusiasm and drive infectious. We often visit different restaurants together. When we both won two stars, Beth and I went for an incredible dinner at Bar Boulud, in London, with Sat and his wife, Amanda. It was a very special night, because that's never going to happen again.

There's something quite extreme about us both. When I was drinking, I was always determined to be last man standing, no matter what, and so would Sat. We would still be there at 5am. The difference is that, the next day, I wouldn't be able to get up, while Sat would be in the gym at 7.30am, pushing on. I couldn't keep up with it, so I gave up! But we both work hard and play hard still. He's a world-class chef and a world-class friend.
thehandandflowers.co.uk

Tom's very generous, a great character, larger than life. We're lucky because we're very good friends and our wives get on really well too. We're similar ages, we've got a restaurant with rooms and they've got a pub with rooms – we are going through a similar journey in our professional lives.

It's great for both of us to have someone to talk to, who really understands. We trust each other – in this industry it's good to have a comrade. We're very similar in our outlook, our jokes and our music. Tom's a funny guy. He came to my 40th birthday dressed as me, his head shaved and in a chef's jacket just like mine.

We both love life. I think when you get to a certain age – we have both worked in the industry for 28 years – you can make time for other things. We go shooting and we like fast cars. We're also both into fitness.

I love it, because it gets you out of the kitchen and keeps you motivated. Tom loves swimming, and him coming off the drink is the best thing that's ever happened to him. It's been a big transformation. He looks great and has fantastic energy. These days we have a nice cup of tea when we catch up! Our cooking styles are quite different. What I do is very innovative and inquisitive. It can be a little frivolous, a bit cheeky, but serious when it comes to flavour. Tom's had classic training and it shows in his food. He's a master of his craft. Tom's food has got layers of flavour, but it's also quite robust. I could always identify it, because his character is all over his plate.
restaurantsatbains.com

'It's great for both of us to have someone to talk to – in this industry it's good to have a comrade'

Photographs TOBY SCOTT | WIKIPEDIA



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A festive feast!

Our latest Food Club event last month saw the award-winning chef de cuisine, Darren Velvick of The Croft, Dubai Marriott Harbour Hotel & Suites cook up a festive feast fit for a king. An exclusive group of our Premium members not only got to taste the mouthwatering three-course menu themed for the season, but also learnt exactly how to make it at the state-of-the-art Miele kitchen gallery.





















PHOTOGRAPHS SOPHIE MCCARRICK | Photography MAKSYM PORIECHKIN















THE CROFT

HERE ARE THE THREE IRRESISTIBLY DELICIOUS RECIPES CREATED BY CHEF DARREN FOR YOU TO TRY AT HOME:



STARTER

Pulled salmon on homemade seed crackers and pickled cucumber ribbons

SERVES 4

FOR THE PULLED SALMON
1 large shallot, finely chopped
20g olive oil
180g fresh salmon, chopped into large cubes
50g smoked salmon
50g mayonnaise to bind
1 lemon zest
1 tbsp chives, chopped
1 tbsp dill, chopped
FOR THE POACHING LIQUOR
1lt water
1 large shallot, sliced
1 bay leaf
1 tsp white peppercorns
5g herb stalks from dill
5g chives
5g tarragon

1 Sweat down the chopped shallot in the olive oil.
2 Add all of the ingredients needed for the poaching liquor to a medium sized pan and bring to the boil. Add the fresh salmon cubes and bring back to the boil. Remove from the heat and leave from approximately 8 minutes and remove the salmon, making sure its still pink in the middle, then allow to chill.
3 Flake the salmon and add the smoked salmon then the mayonnaise, zest, chives, dill and shallots. Take care when mixing to ensure that you don't smash everything up.
4 Chill the salmon and then it's ready to serve.

FOR THE PICKLED CUCUMBER
1 whole cucumber, peeled into ribbons
1 tsp salt
40g sugar
40ml cider vinegar

1 Use a peeler to peel the cucumber into ribbons vertically, from top to bottom, then put the slices into a large bowl, sprinkle with salt and mix well.
2 Leave the cucumber for 10 minutes to absorb the salt then rinse with cold water. Drain off excess liquid in a colander. Return cucumber to the large bowl.
3 Combine sugar, vinegar and bring to boil to dissolve the sugar. Allow the liquid to cool then add the slices of cucumber. Refrigerate overnight or for a few hours before serving.

FOR THE SUNFLOWER SEED CRACKER
125g plain flour
2g salt
¾ tsp bicarbonate of soda
12g butter, chilled
80ml milk
20g sunflower seeds
Sprinkle of Maldon sea salt

1 Heat the oven to 200C. Put the flour, salt and bicarbonate of soda into a bowl and grate in the chilled butter.
2 Rub the butter into the flour using your fingertips until the mixture resembles breadcrumbs, then stir in the milk and add the sunflower seed then knead lightly.
3 Roll out thinly, about 2-3mm thick, and place on a non-stick baking sheet. Prick with a fork, sprinkle with sea salt and cut into squares. Bake in the oven for 10 minutes, or until golden.

MAIN

Stuffed turkey crown, sage and onion stuffing, pearl barley and sweet corn risotto and roasted leg with chestnuts. Crispy sprouts and mushrooms, turkey cooking jus

SERVES 6-8

FOR THE TURKEY CROWN
7kg whole turkey
1 whole lemon
2 sprigs rosemary
8 sprigs thyme
3 cloves garlic, crushed

1 Take the legs off the turkey and set aside for later for the pearl barley recipe. Trim the crown and keep any bones and trimming for the sauce later, working gently not to tear the skin loosen the skin of the turkey, keep the skin attached in the centre around the sternum. Pipe the stuffing (recipe next) under the skin of the breast using your hands to smooth the mixture all over evenly. Place the trimmings and bones with a lemon that has been quartered with rosemary and thyme and the crushed cloves of garlic on to the roasting tray. Chill the stuffed crown in the fridge for about 1 hour until the stuffing is hard.
2 Place the crown and legs in the tray on top of the bones, herbs, garlic and lemon. Roast the crown and legs in an oven of 200C in fan assisted oven for 1 hour. Keep checking that it is not coloring too quickly. Turn down the oven to 160C and cover with foil if it's getting too dark, and cook for a further 20 minutes. If you have a digital thermometer then the core temperature needs to be 75C. Rest for 15 minutes.
3 Take the roasting tray with all the cooking juices in and strain out the pieces through a fine sieve. Skim off the fat so you are just left with the stock, you can thicken this with some corn flour or leave it natural.
4 Once the legs are cool enough to be handled then take the meat off the bone and set aside for the risotto (recipe next).

FOR THE STUFFING
5g sage, chopped
150g onion, chopped
300g butter
100g breadcrumbs

1 Sweat together the sage and onion in a small pan.
2 Add all ingredients, including the sage and onion in a food processor. Place into piping bag until ready to use.

FOR THE SWEET CORN PEARL BARLEY
175g pearl barley, soaked and boiled until soft
2lt chicken stock
1 clove garlic, crushed
1 sprig thyme
100g Mascarpone

100g Parmesan, grated
¼ bunch parsley, chopped
250g sweet corn kernels, cooked and roasted
1 whole sweet corn, kernels removed and roasted
Salt, to season
Fresh ground white pepper, to season
1 bunch spinach

1 Cook the pearl barley in chicken stock with garlic, thyme until soft. Bind together with the pearl barley, mascarpone and parmesan add the chopped parsley and roasted sweet corn and roasted turkey leg, season with salt and pepper to roast the sweet corn, take a hot frying pan, add a drop of olive oil and fry until golden, add salt and pepper to season.

FOR THE CRISPY BRUSSEL SPROUTS
200g Brussel sprouts
1 whole lemon, zest and juice

1 Boil a pan of water and add salt to season.
2 Cut the sprouts in half and wash well in cold water. Once boiling add the sprouts and boil until semi firm (approx 3-4 minutes). Pour off the hot water and cool the sprouts down quickly in cold water.
3 Dry off the sprouts really well and heat a deep fryer to 180C. Deep fry the sprouts until golden and crispy. Squeeze over the lemon and zest, mix well in a bowl and serve.

FOR THE ROASTED CHESTNUTS
100g whole chestnuts in the shell
Pinch of salt



1 Score the chestnut across the shell deep enough to see the nut inside. Cover with cold water in a saucepan and add a pinch of salt. Bring up to a simmer then take out and place into roasting tray.
2 Roast in the oven at 220C for approximately 25 minutes. Take out the chestnuts and allow to cool for about 15 minutes. Peel off the shell and the inner shell should also come away. If some of the shell is still left on, use your fingers to peel it away

FOR THE SAUTEED MUSHROOMS
200g button mushrooms of chestnut mushrooms
30g butter
2 sprigs thyme leaves
1 clove garlic, grated
Salt, to season
Black pepper, to season

1 Slice the mushrooms and place into a frying pan, heat to a medium heat and add the butter. Once turning golden add the thyme, garlic, salt and ground black pepper to season.

DESSERT

Warm chocolate, punchy brandy cream and chocolate cornflakes

SERVES 4

FOR THE BRANDY CREAM
200g caster sugar
200ml brandy (or 2 oranges, zest)
1 whole lemon, zest and juice
600ml double cream

1 Combine sugar, brandy, lemon zest and juice in a bowl.
2 In another bowl lightly whip the cream gently fold the brandy mixture into the cream. Do not over mix as it starts to set the cream straight away, set in fridge for an hour or so before using.

FOR THE CHOCOLATE POT MIX
165g egg yolks
75g sugar
1 vanilla pod
300ml milk
450ml whipping cream
525g of 66% chocolate or dark bitter chocolate

1 Whisk eggs, sugar and vanilla together until light and creamy pour over boiling milk and cream, cook out until the mixture thickens whilst still hot strain over the chocolate and stir until smooth and mixed.
2 Pipe or spoon onto ramekins and bake at 180C for 6-8 minutes so still liquid in the centre.



FOR THE CHOCLATE CORNFLAKES
100g cornflakes
112g milk chocolate, 33% or milk chocolate of good quality
55g cocoa butter

1 Melt chocolate and cocoa butter. Mix in cornflakes until thoroughly coated and set in fridge.
2 To serve, tip the chocolate pot into a bowl, scatter over the cornflakes and place a spoon full of brandy cream on the side.

BBC goodfood Middle East
FOOD CLUB

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Fabulous food-filled fun

Hundreds of food-loving visitors enjoyed three days of live cooking, celebrity chef demonstrations and live music at the second annual Taste of Abu Dhabi show last month. Here we take a look-back at the tasty event.

The three-day al fresco festival saw residents of Abu Dhabi and visitors alike come together for a week of indulgence from November 5 at Yas Island's Du Arena. With a wide selection of fresh fare served for as little as Dhs15 from 25 local restaurants including the likes of Atayeb, Al Gusto, Belgian Beer Café, Blue Grill, BOA, Café Dalsace, Caramel, Carluccios, Flooka, KOI, Prego's, Royal Orchid Restaurant, Safina, Teatro, Villa Toscana and more, it's safe to say that no one left Taste of Abu Dhabi hungry.

With The Wailers kick-starting the event with a musical bang, the arena was jam-packed with dancing foodies, who also enjoyed attractions like the popular cookery school, an entertaining kids' zone for the little ones, and not forgetting the chef's theatre where live cookery demos were given by the likes of Eric Lanlard, Reza Mahammad, Jenny Morris, Suzanne Husseini, Nikita Gandhi and others.

We're definitely looking forward to next year's event!



A large stage at the front saw visitors gather to enjoy various musical acts, including the popular reggae band, The Wailers!



Hundreds of foodies tried their hand at whipping up a dish in the cookery school



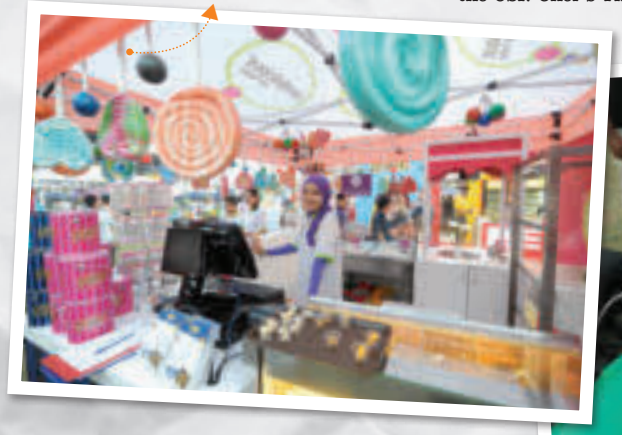
Reza Mahammad and Jenny Morris during their live cooking demo



A jam-packed audience enjoying the OSN Chef's Theatre



The event was quite the musical affair with lots of singing



Lovers of candy were in their element at this stand!



There were plenty of exciting activities available to keep the little ones entertained



Arabic delights were enjoyed by many

Text by SOPHIE MCCARRICK | Photographs by MAKSYM PORIECHKIN



Hugs for all! Various mascots at the show were spreading the love with everyone that came along.

Over the three days, well-known chefs took to the stage to entertain visitors





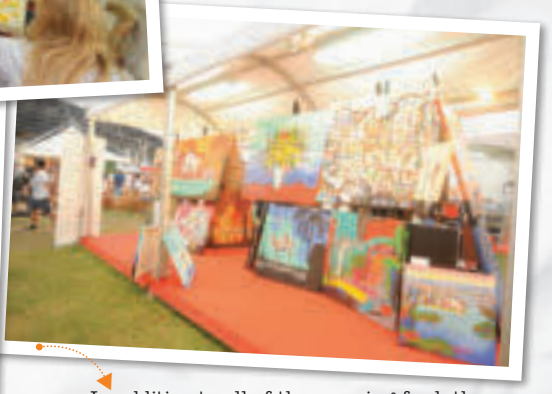
Boys and their toys! A group of friends enjoying a game of foosball



A kids zone kept the children occupied over the weekend







In addition to all of the amazing food, the festival showcased some really beautiful artwork

Cookery school visitors got hands on in the demo kitchen



The smell of freshly grilled meats filled the air

The event was perfect for family and friends wanting to spend quality time together







The BBC Good Food Middle East stand looked really cool when it was lit up in the evening!



Chef Paul Frangie did various cooking demos for Lurpak over the course of the weekend

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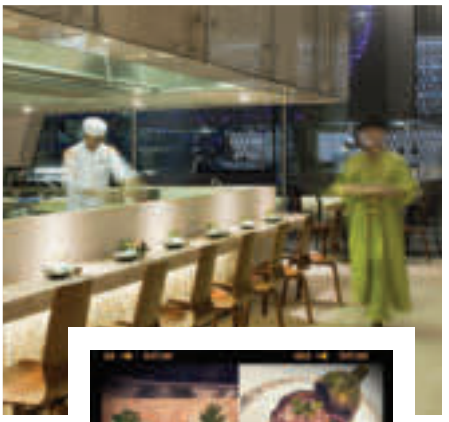
Official Lifestyle Magazine

Tried & rested

This month we discover a desirable culinary getaway from within the region









YAS VICEROY ABU DHABI

Where: The grand structure stands out on the Yas Island with its magnificent exterior that glows at night with a canopy of LED lights. Overlooking the Yas Marina Formula 1 Circuit and a yacht-filled marina, those looking for an adventure will feel at home at the Yas Viceroy Abu Dhabi. However during our visit, our main aim was to sample to scrumptious foodie delights on offer. The hotel offers an impressive selection of international restaurants, along with an array of glamorous bars and lounges. We checked into a spacious Deluxe Suite, which was both luxurious and comfortable with a social lounge area, a decadent bathroom complete with a standalone bath tub, and a vast bedroom. The hotel has plenty on offer, both indoors and out – we'd highly recommend a stroll through the picturesque Palm Gardens!

Facilities & amenities:
After staying at the Yas Viceroy, it quickly became clear that there is little that this hotel doesn't offer and be sure to speak to the super-helpful concierge desk about what to do on the island (Yas Beach and Yas Waterworld are must-see's). On offer at the hotel are its state-of-the-art spa and fitness facilities, along with both a family and child-free pool where guests can opt for splash-free relaxation before heading to pre-dinner drinks at Skylite Rooftop & Lounge. An unusual addition to this property is its art gallery, which is certainly worth browsing through.



What we ate:
We enjoyed nibbles at the in-house Italian restaurant, Amici, upon arrival, where we delighted in the restaurant's Cicchetti menu – a sharing concept with small, but satisfying dishes – and sampled the homemade spinach and ricotta ravioli paired with the mouth-watering Burrata Pizzette.

For dinner, we were truly spoilt by Chef Idfan Mierza, who prepared a divine assortment of dishes that we made our way through at Kazu. Serving up truly delicious Japanese fare, this restaurant allows you to tuck your chopsticks into everything from sushi and sashimi to Toban Yaki and Robatayaki and offers a wide range of meat, seafood and vegetarian dishes.

For starters, we eagerly made our way through a bowl of warm edamame sprinkled with sea salt, before chef began wowing us unusual dishes such as Taco's topped with a creamy blend of tuna (this surprisingly turned out to be one of our favourites from the selection), followed by eggplant miso Robatayaki and an beautiful platter of sushi and sashimi specialities, which disappeared quite quickly. Though we were already struggling, sizzling plates of Teppan tofu and Toban Yaki wagyu beef were hard to resist and we'd highly recommend saving space for them! Of course, our dessert stomachs managed to cram in a sweet end to the evening; pretty platters of berries, mochi ice cream and sweet sake.

Best for: A scrumptious staycation for thrill-seeking foodies.

If you want to go: From Dhs630 per night. Call +9712-6560000 | E-mail yas.reservations@viceroyhotelsandresorts.com.



Surena Chande

Photographs SUPPLIED and by REVIEWER

AN INGENIOUS INGREDIENT





French cream is a truly versatile ingredient that professional and home chefs alike have grown to incorporate and even rely on in the kitchen. Defined as being the milk fat obtained from the skimming process, cream provides a multitude of benefits in cooking and baking. We take a look at the benefits of dairy cream and its uses with Head Pastry Chef of La Serre, Zairah Molina.

Fabulously flavoursome

Chef Zairah says, "The versatility of cream allows it to add richness, stability and depth to pastries. It can also be used to lighten a dessert, or balance contrasting flavours to find a common ground." When cooking, it is easy to forget why each ingredient is used, what its purpose is or how it adds to the flavours. Cream, in this instance, provides a subtle and non-domineering change in flavour to a dish or bake. For example, adding just a drizzle to certain ingredients such as lemons or cocoa reduces their bitterness or acidity.

"It is imperative to use only the 'crème de la crème', which I have found in using French creams as this works best for my specific applications", she adds.

Shape shifter

The versatility of cream is often overlooked, but watching a once-liquid ingredient of whipping cream transform into soft, fluffy peaks is a quick reminder of just how easily it can be utilised. "Cream can be transformed and adapted to an abundance of applications. It can be the star of a dish or an invisible vessel conveying flavours and infusions through the the properties found in its fat content", Chef Zairah explains. From mousses to ice cream, liquid and whipping cream can be worked and altered for hundreds, if not thousands, of recipes.

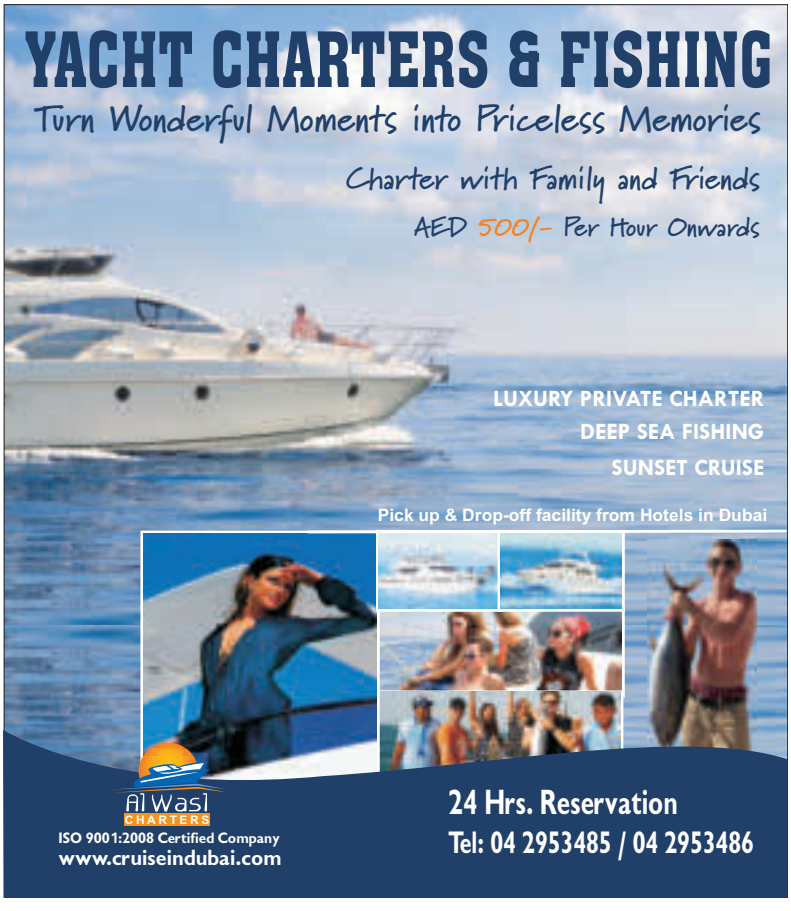
Standing the test of time

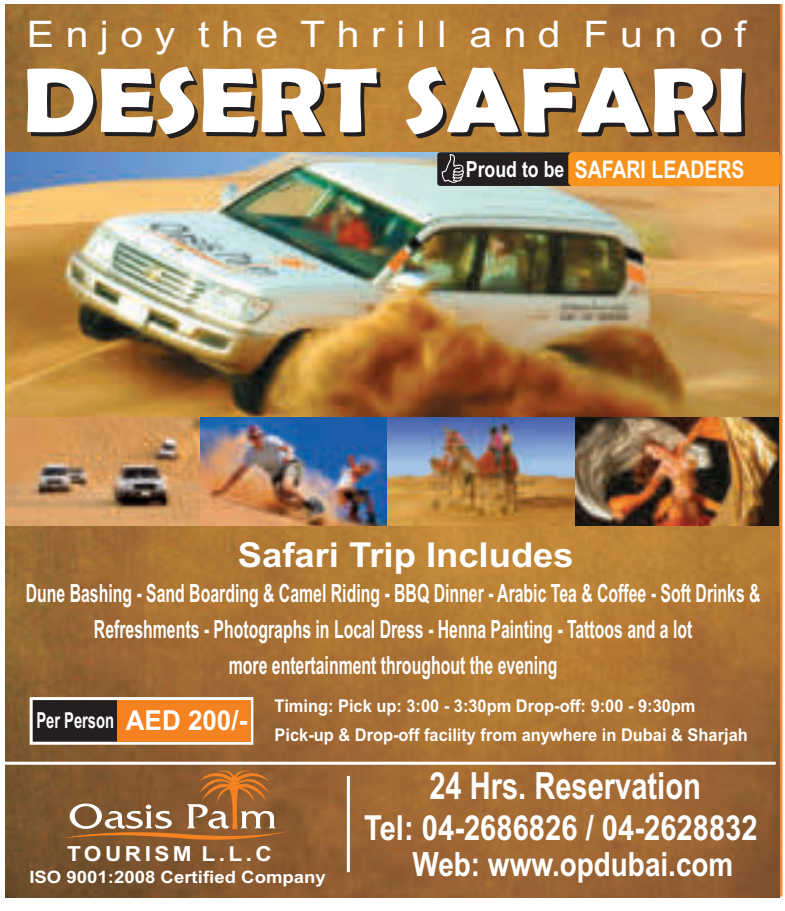
We've come a long way since the days of being limited to fresh, refrigerated cream with it now being readily available in cartons and tins on supermarket shelves. This adaption makes it far easier for chefs to incorporate into their dishes and bakes making it even more of a kitchen essential.

Goodbye, grease!

Though we certainly aren't claiming pastries are healthy, cream is a surprisingly lighter alternative to other fats and much less greasy due to its rich water content making it soft, creamy and light!

Text SURENA CHANDE | Photography SUPPLIED





A CHOCOLATEY CELEBRATION!







October 28 marked one of our favourite days in the calendar: National Chocolate Day! ChoCo'a, a delightful store filled with scrumptious chocolate creations, celebrated it with a wonderfully insightful day that comprised a live truffle-making station, a beautiful branch-like chocolate sculpture, an introduction to its new line of chocolates introduced by its very own chef, Sanaa Katir and more.

Also in attendance of the exciting event were prominent chefs from hotels and The Chocolate Academy, along with a selection of passionate students from Universal American School, Dubai who were all treated to a fun-filled day.

We spoke to chef Sanaa Katir about all things chocolate!

Q. Tell us about the new line of crafted chocolates…

The new line of chocolates were made with the thought of blending strong flavours with equivalently subtle flavours to form refreshing and unique creations. The three new flavours are:

Apricot compote with biscuit spread – Freshly-prepared apricot compote with cinnamon is blended with a light biscuit spread and moulded with milk chocolate. The balance between the two flavours and textures make this chocolate heavenly.

Raspberry jelly with vanilla ganache – Raspberry jelly topped with light vanilla ganache provides a great combination of fruity and sweet white chocolate. Added to this is crunchy popping candy, so with every bite, your palette enjoys the unusual sensation!

Water chocolate ganache – Our dairy-free ganache completely breaks the trend of traditional chocolate ganache, which is usually made with a mixture of butter and cream. Instead, our method extends the shelf life of the product while maintaining the rich texture of dark chocolate ganache with a blissful taste.

These were created in correlation to National Chocolate Day and we had various thought processes and methods behind each one. For example, we chose apricot as it gives an oriental touch and can easily be associated with Middle-Eastern culture. We needed another flavour to contrast this with, but one that veered away from the norm, so we chose biscuit spread and the feedback's been very positive so far!

Q. How do you believe chocolate making is evolving?

We pride ourselves as chocolate artisans and not a commercial chocolate-maker that mass-produces. We ensure that each and every single piece that is involved with ChoCo'a has a story behind it, along with unique flavour combinations that are far less common in this region.

An example of our unique chocolate making skills are the flavours we have recently developed and our techniques used for water ganache, which are highly scientific and involve plenty of experiments and trials before launching it as a final chocolate product.

Q. The festive season is upon us, so what can chocolate-lovers expect to see from ChoCo'a? Will there be some special offerings?

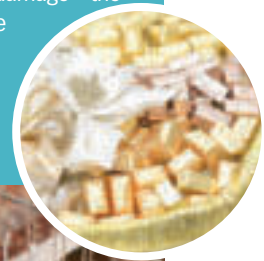
We prepare an exclusive collection for each season, be it Easter, Christmas, Ramadan, National Day or even, Halloween.

Our Corporate Christmas collection has already been launched for the season, but some new flavours and products are in progress that will soon be in the boutique so be sure to come and visit!

CHEW ON THESE CHOCCY FACTS!

Did you know the following things about chocolate?

- In Mayan times, the cocoa bean was used as currency because it was considered to be worth more than gold dust – we agree!
- Over two-thirds of the world's cocoa is grown in Africa, and Côte d'Ivoire alone produces 33% of the world's supply.
- Chocolate is rich in minerals – dark chocolate, to be precise, which contains a whopping 67% of your recommended daily allowance of iron along with being packed with minerals such as potassium, zinc and selenium.
- The flavonols in dark chocolate can help to protect your skin against sun damage – the next time we're heading to the beach, we'll be indulging in a few pieces of dark chocolate after slathering ourselves in sun cream!





Text SURENA CHANDE | Photography MAKSYM PORIECHKIN

The Pro Chef Awards 2015



Bringing together some of the finest talents from the hospitality and culinary industries, The Pro Chef Awards 2015 retuned for another successful year. On November 11, CPI Media Group welcomed over 350 guests to its dazzling gala evening at the Habtoor Grand Beach Resort & Spa, to celebrate stand-out members of the hospitality and food and beverage industries.

A true pioneer in the region's awards offerings, winners were drawn exclusively from 4- and 5-star F&B establishments with voting limited to those who work in the industry – what better way to judge the region's leading outlets, suppliers (for both back and front of house) and chefs!

The fun-filled evening comprised entertainment, a delicious spread of food and of course, the presentation of awards to a spectacular line-up of talents in the region.

Included in the collection of 29 awards on the evening were categories such as: Best Tableware (RAK Porcelain), Best Knives (Shun), Hygiene Champion (Aurelia Caccamo, JW Marriott Marquis), Executive Chef (Chris Lester, Jumeirah Group) and the Editor's Choice (Darren Velvick, The Croft).

BBC Good Food Middle East would like to support The Pro Chef Middle East in congratulating all of the winners!



CHEF DARREN VELVICK OF THE CROFT, DUBAI MARRIOTT HARBOUR HOTEL & SUITES WON EDITOR'S CHOICE AWARD 'CHEF'S CHEF'.



HABTOOR GRAND BEACH RESORT & SPA'S CULINARY TEAM WERE BEHIND THE DELICIOUS DISHES SERVED UP AT THE AWARDS





CONGRATULATIONS TO GEUN SUNG PARK FROM ASIA DE CUBA WHO WON THE BEST INNOVATION CHEF AWARD ON THE EVENING!



LIJ HERON, EXECUTIVE CHEF OF LEXINGTON GRILL, WALDORF ASTORIA RAS AL KHAIMAH, WON THE AWARD FOR BEST MEAT CHEF.





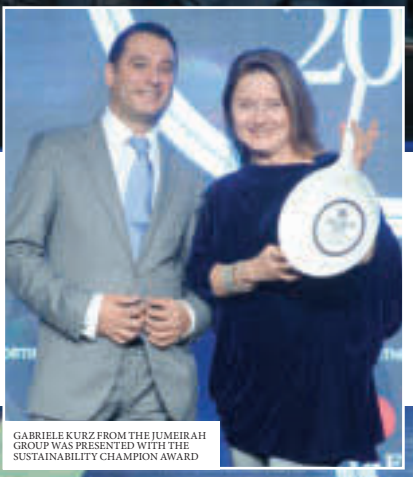
CPI MEDIA GROUP CHAIRMAN DOMINIC DE SOUSA WITH PRO CHEF OF THE YEAR BEN TOBBIT FROM JUMEIRAH GROUP



TOM HAMMOND FROM JUMEIRAH GROUP, WHO WAS VOTED THE BEST JUNIOR CHEF!







GABRIELE KURZ FROM THE JUMEIRAH GROUP WAS PRESENTED WITH THE SUSTAINABILITY CHAMPION AWARD



CHRIS LESTER, EXECUTIVE CHEF, JUMEIRAH RESTAURANT GROUP, WON THE AWARD FOR BEST EXECUTIVE CHEF.



COLIN CLAGUE, EXECUTIVE CHEF, JEAN-GEORGES DUBAI WON THE AWARD FOR BEST MIDDLE EASTERN CHEF.



THE PRO CHEF'S EDITOR IN CHIEF, DAVE REEDER, PRESENTED UWE MICHAEL FROM THE RADISSON BLU WITH THE EDITOR'S CHOICE - FOOD AMBASSADOR AWARD



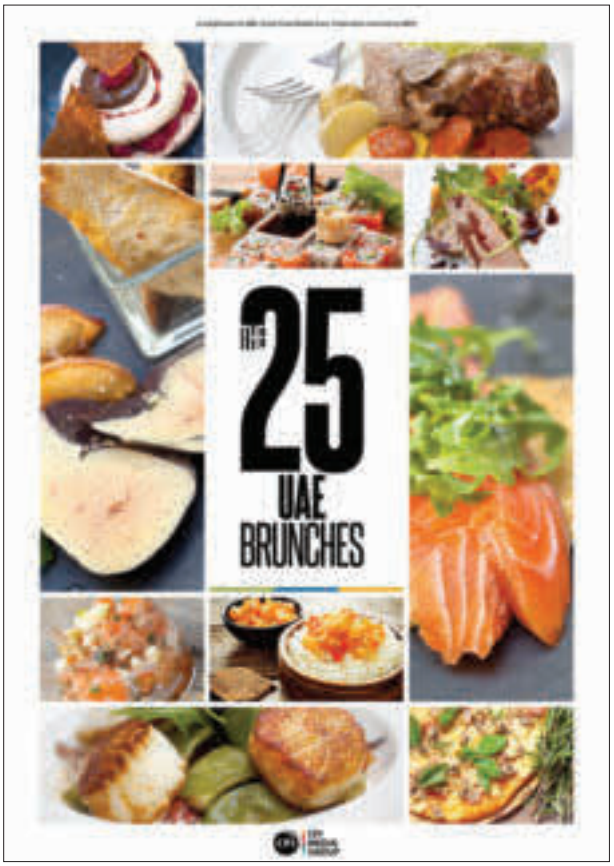




FABIEN FAYOLLE FROM THE ARMANI HOTEL DUBAI WON THE BEST PASTRY CHEF AWARD

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CPI MEDIA GROUP

Competition



Win!

A **2-night stay for up to 4 people in Oman** worth **Dhs9,000!**

Be treated to a decadent two-night stay for up to four people in the Royal Suite at the 4-star Millennium Resort Mussanah, Oman.

The lucky winner and up to three guests will be treated to a two-night stay in a luxurious Royal Suite at Millennium Resort Mussanah (on a room-only basis) with a separate living room and second twin bedroom. Located in the South Batinah Region of Muscat on a private beach, the resort overlooks its very own beautiful marina and the picturesque sights of the Gulf of Oman.

It features 311 lavishly-decorated rooms and serviced apartments, along with offering a range of leisure and lifestyle facilities making it one of the most enticing wellness destinations.

Having originally been built to host the second Asian Beach Games in 2010, the property is equipped with a host of fun-filled facilities providing an array of activities such as diving trips, sailing, a ladies-only swimming pool and Jacuzzi, infinity pools, tennis courts, an 18-hole mini golf course.

Also on offer at the exquisite resort are three restaurants; Maydan, Al Bahar and Azure, along with a poolside bar, shisha lounge and the signature Zayna Spa where you can be blissfully pampered.

The prize draw for a two-night stay for one winner and up to three guests at Millennium Resort Mussanah, Oman worth Dhs9,000 will be made at the end of December 2015. The prize is valid until 30 September 2016, reservations are required and confirmation is subject to conditions and availability. The winner must arrange their own transport.

Scan this QR code to go straight to our website.

Log on to bbcgoodfoodme.com
to enter this competition and simply answer this question:

List three of the activities on offer at the resort.

*Terms & conditions apply. Flights are not included in this prize. Employees of CPI Media Group are not eligible to enter. Winners will be selected on random basis from correct entries.

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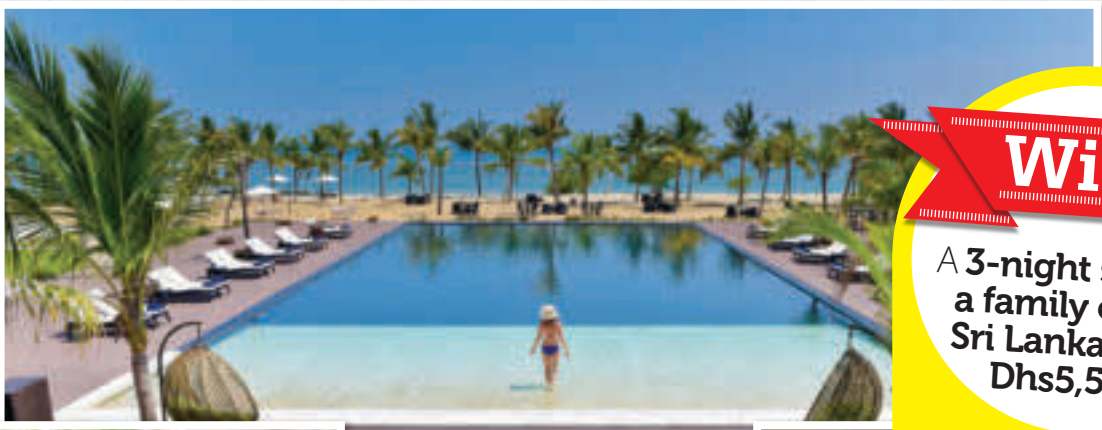
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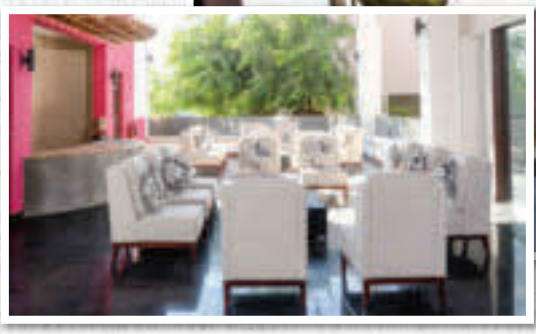
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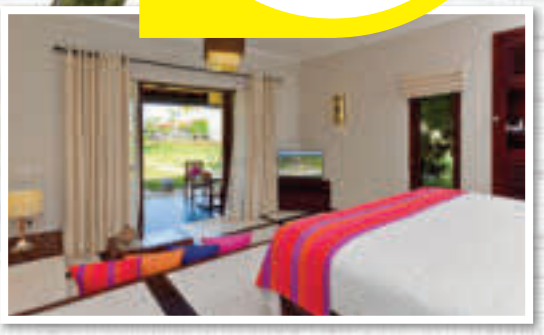
BBC goodfood Middle East

Competition









Win!

A **3-night stay for a family of 4 in Sri Lanka** worth **Dhs5,500!**

Enjoy the unspoilt east coast of Sri Lanka with a relaxing three-night stay for two adults & two children, inclusive of meals, at The Sun Aqua Pasikudah resort.

You and your family could win the chance to experience the renowned hospitality and rich cultural traditions of Sri Lanka by enjoying a three-night stay in one of the resort's luxury oceanfront suites and dining in the many restaurants.

Sun Aqua Pasikudah is one of the first five-star boutique resorts on the secluded Pasikudah Bay in the east coast of Sri Lanka, 35km northwest of Batticaloa. With a selection of delightful culinary offerings, the resort promises international gourmet cuisine, created using home-grown vegetables from the gardens to ensure that a fresh taste sensation is provided every time.

The resort, easily accessible from Colombo via an hour's flight by sea-plane, features just 34 suites and two grand beach pavilions, surrounded by incredible natural beauty, welcoming locals and perfect year-round temperatures. You also have the opportunity to visit local heritage sites, tea plantations and going on a safari in the jungles of Minneriya National Park.

The prize draw for a three-night stay for a family of four (two adults and two children) at The Sun Aqua Pasikudah Resort will be made at the end of December 2015. The prize is valid until 30 April 2016, reservations are required and confirmation is subject to conditions and availability. The winner must arrange their own flights to Sri Lanka and sea plane transfers.

Scan this QR code to go straight to our website.

Log on to bbcgoodfoodme.com
to enter this competition and simply answer this question:

What part of Sri Lanka is the resort located in?

*Terms & conditions apply. Flights are not included in this prize. Employees of CPI Media Group are not eligible to enter. Winners will be selected on random basis from correct entries.

Competitions

Fabulous prizes, from dining vouchers to gourmet goodies, up for grabs.





WIN! BRUNCH FOR A WINNER AND GUEST AT LE CLASSIQUE, EMIRATES GOLF CLUB, DUBAI, WORTH DHS800

Indulge in a modern gastronomical French Friday Brunch at Le Classique, Emirates Golf Club with a guest where you can delight in fine French fare, soft drinks and a bottle of wine. With beautiful views, the perfect setting for a special afternoon for two and delicious offerings, Le Classique's brunch features a rotisserie station, a mouth-watering selection of cheese and much more.



WIN! ONE OF FIVE THE ENTERTAINER DUBAI FINE DINING 2016 APPS, WORTH DHS395 EACH

What better way to start the New Year than with The Entertainer Dubai Fine Dining 2016 app! Packed with fantastic offers for some of Dubai's best restaurants, the app has quickly become an essential for foodies in the region and now you have the chance to get your hands on it for free. Featuring over 900 'buy one, get one free' deals for restaurants such as Asia Asia, The Meat Co. and The Ivy, new inclusions to the 2016 app include Nineteen, 360 and Zero Gravity. All apps come with The Entertainer Travel 2016 free, which has over 300 'buy one night, get one free' offers for hotels worldwide.

WIN! FRIDAY BRUNCH FOR A WINNER AND GUEST AT DUSIT THANI, DUBAI, WORTH DHS570

Enjoy a delightful brunch at the Dusit Thani Dubai where you can delight in a centralised buffet and live cooking stations from its three speciality restaurants – Benjarong, PAX Ristorante & Lounge and The Californian Restaurant – while taking in views of the Burj Khalifa. The brunch is bursting with great food and entertainment such as live piano music and cultural Thai performances, so be sure to give it a visit!





WIN! A DINING VOUCHER AT GINGER RESTAURANT, RAMADA JUMEIRAH HOTEL, WORTH DHS500

The restaurant's impressive and aromatic open kitchen makes for the perfect place to spend a meal with fellow foodies as you watch chefs skilfully prepare authentic and traditional Thai, Japanese and Chinese cuisine with flaming woks. Specialising in contemporary twists on traditional Asian flavours, the restaurant allows you to transport yourself to the far reaches of the Orient.

WIN! A BALINESE BODY MASSAGE AND COMPLIMENTARY MINI FACIAL AT MANDARA SPA, THE H HOTEL, WORTH DHS415

Experience the benefits of a luxurious full body massage using the purest essential oils to renew, strengthen and heal the body and mind. Additionally, you will have full access to the spa's hydrotherapy facilities: sauna chamber, steam room, whirlpool and relaxation lounge, along with fresh fruit and herbal teas to allow you to full unwind and enjoy complete pampering bliss.



To stand a chance to win these prizes, visit our competitions page on www.bbcgoodfoodme.com, or simply scan this QR code with your mobile to go directly to the website, and answer the simple questions.

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Behind the scenes

Take a look at what the *BBC Good Food Middle East* team got up to last month! Places we've been, things we love and the latest must-try dishes!
#bbcgoodfoodme



Sophie and Sales Executive, Lara, had a great time at Taste of Abu Dhabi last month.



Our friend, Dima Sharif, stopped by to give us a sneak-peak of her deliciously tasty new product line



Sophie had a wonderful experience at the world's first fully-underwater restaurant, Ithaa at Conrad Maldives



Sophie and Odie got glammed-up for The Pro Chef Awards last month!



Michael got creative with flat-packed people in preperation for the IKEA bloggers event!



Maks means serious business when he's on shoot! Here he's taking head chef Brian's photo at The Hide restaurant



Sophie caught up with exec chef Marco from Conrad Maldives! Look out for the interview next month



Odie enjoyed a tasty seafood paella at Slapfish in Ibn Battuta Mall



We enjoyed delicious pad thai in Thailand last month! Where do you eat Thai in Dubai? We love it!



We indulged in a fabulous selection of sushi and sake at the wonderful Kazu in Yas Viceroy Hotel

Share your foodie snaps with us
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Compiled by SOPHIE MCCARRICK | Photographs SUPPLIED



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